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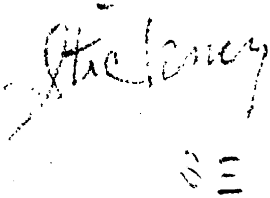
DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT

BY

ALBERT STICKNEY

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DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT

A STUDY OF POLITICS

BY

ALBERT STICKNEY

NEW YORK
HARPER & BROTHERS, FRANKLIN SQUARE
1885

THE NEW YORK
PUBLIC LIBRARY
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DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT.

INTRODUCTORY.

The chief immediate purpose in writing this book is to convince its reader that the most pressing present political need of the people of the United States is the calling of a National Constitutional Convention, in accordance with the provisions of our national Constitution, to consider the question of constitutional amendment.

What amendments shall be made, after that convention shall be called, is a question on which individuals will differ. On that question I shall develop with some detail my individual opinions. But it will not be necessary for the reader to agree with me as to every detail, or even as to the general features, of the scheme of constitutional reorganization which is here presented. It will be sufficient for my immediate purpose if he shall be convinced that we must have constitutional reorganization of some kind, and that, to that end,

it is necessary that the people of these United States should again assemble in its National Constitutional Convention.

Such a convention is, to my mind, the only means by which we can take the next step in the great work in which this people is engaged, the development of democratic government. For the last one hundred years we have been engaged in a great political experiment. The territory of the United States has been a great political laboratory. We have been making the world's first experiment, on a large scale, in democratic government. Before our time, single cities and single small districts had made rough rudimentary attempts in fashioning governments that have been called democratic. There have been, too, in the governments of some great nations other than our own, some single democratic features. But under our national constitution of 1787, for the first time in the world's history, so far as I am aware, the experiment has been made of a single government, for a great nation, which was, in its fundamental principles and in the purpose of its founders, intended to be thoroughly democratic.

The experiment has been a great success. The results have not been in all respects what impatient men might have wished. But the outlook

is full of promise. The growth of democratic government is not yet a finished growth. But the framers of our national constitution had no idea that their work was done for all time. The most sanguine among them expected no great success from the scheme of government which they had devised. The greater number of them looked forward to the coming years with fear and foreboding. George Mason of Virginia wrote: "This "government will commence in a moderate aris-"tocracy; it is at present impossible to foresee "whether it will, in its operation, produce a mon-"archy, or a corrupt, oppressive aristocracy; it "will most probably vibrate some years between "the two, and then terminate in the one or the "other." That is only a fair specimen of the feelings with which the beginning of our experiment was watched by a large number of the ablest men in the country. Events have shown that fears of that nature were groundless. There never was any real danger of a corrupt aristocracy, or of a monarchy. Experience has shown that when any people once reaches such a degree of intelligence that it thinks for itself, when it once determines to ask the control of its own public affairs, it will, in the end, unless overpowered by superior external forces, get that control. Experience shows that a

thinking free people can live through many political mistakes, and endure many great political trials. Actual events have shown that there was no real danger to the liberties of the people from the establishment of a single powerful national government. We have found that it is as possible, and as necessary, to have one strong government for the nation, as for a single village, or town, or city, or state. We have demonstrated, for all time, the fact that a stable, vigorous government for a great people can be framed on democratic principles.

But we must go on with the experiment. We must continue the growth. We must enter on its next stage.

I am a believer in democratic government, not from any vague faith in sounding and glittering generalities; not only from a conviction that democratic government rests on the broad principles of giving justice and equal rights under the law to all men; but also from the conviction that it is, for the obtaining mere practical results, for the efficient administration of public affairs, the best government in all respects that can now be devised. Many men among the believers in democratic institutions are willing to concede, that other political systems may be superior to a democracy

in certain single points. They are willing to concede, that a despotism may give greater vigor of administration, that a limited constitutional monarchy, as it is termed, may give a wiser and more stable general policy. Few men hold the opinion that a democratic government is, in all respects, the best of all political systems.

My individual belief is, however, that a democratic government, if it really deserve the name, will be, in all respects, the best political system that can be devised, for any people that has reached that stage of political growth where it demands for itself the control of its own public affairs. We may safely assume that no people will ever get that control until it shall make that demand. When, however, any people has once become a thinking people, when it has once decided that it will not submit its will to the will of any one man or class of men, then, in my belief, a democratic government is, in all respects, the best government under which that people can live. Then, in my belief, a democratic government, if it deserve the name, will give to that people a wiser, more flexible, and more stable public policy, a more honest and vigorous administration of public affairs, than any other political system. The hand of the people is a mightier hand, the will of the

people is a stronger will, the judgment of the people is a wiser judgment, than the hand, or the will, or the judgment, of any one man, or class of men.

But it must be a government that is really democratic; a government that is democratic, not merely in form and on paper, but in its essence, and its practical working. Any government that deserves the name of democratic must give to the citizen something more than the right to deposit in a box, once in each year, a printed list of names, placed in his hands by one or another set of professional politicians. The citizen must have real power, he must have a real voice, in the selection of public men, and public measures.

Any system of government that deserves the name of democratic must give to the people, too, something more than the right of periodical revolution, something more than the power of turning out one set of professional politicians, and putting in another, once in one, two, four, or ten years. Democratic government must be something more than a great election mill, with its upper and nether millstones, even if the people is to have the great political privilege once in four years of making the upper and nether millstones change places. Not the least important of the facts that have been

established by our political experience is the one great fact, that democratic government does not consist merely in allowing the individual citizen the nominal right, under the law, of voting, at frequent elections, for large numbers of public officials. There may be such a thing as an over use, or a mis-use, of the process of popular election. It is a possible thing, that a people may have too much election work, that a people may do so much electing that it can do little or nothing else. It is possible, that the work of carrying elections may become so great and so intricate, as to develop a class of professional electioneering agents, who will virtually disfranchise the ordinary citizen.

Moreover, any government that deserves the name of democratic must provide some simple and easy process, whereby the people can form and utter its will and judgment. It must so organize the body politic, that the people shall be able to select, freely, the men of its own deliberate choice, for the highest places in the state. It must secure to those men time and opportunity to get skill and training in public affairs. It must keep them thoroughly under the control, not of professional politicians, but of the people. It must secure a wise, stable public policy, and a vigorous administration of that policy. It must be government, of

the people, by the people, for the people—not a tyranny, of the people, by the election machine, for the election machine.

But such a result we can never have under our present political system, if it is to be called a system. If this seething political cauldron of ours were really democratic government, I, for one, should have great doubts as to our political future. Most thinking men will now agree, that, whatever may be the reason, our public affairs are not administered, in all respects, in full accordance with the will of the people. It is the will of the people, that public affairs should be administered with honesty, efficiency, and wisdom. It is the will of the people, that the administration of public affairs should be in the hands of their best men. But as our political affairs are now ordered, or disordered, we do not get those results. For some reason, the people is practically powerless in carrying out its wishes. We turn and struggle. But we do not accomplish substantial or lasting improvement. We do not get the public officers, or the public measures, for which we strive.

What is the reason?

The reason is that our government is not really democratic. It has some democratic features. But it is not such a system as secures to either

the citizen, or the people, real political freedom. Nor does it secure the supremacy of the people's will and judgment.

Let us realize the truth. The men of 1787 were remarkable men. That Constitutional Convention did a great work. It framed a National Constitution under which, with no substantial change, we have grown to be a great nation. But it has now developed features, good and bad, that its framers never foresaw, the possibility of which no man then imagined.

The necessity of a thorough reorganization of our whole political system, if we are to secure a wise, honest, and efficient administration of public affairs, is a thing of which I hope to convince my reader. That I shall convince one single person that the particular scheme of reorganization here set forth is, in all its points, the one to be adopted, I have no great expectation. What I have here written is only the contribution of one individual to the people's thought, on the people's great problem—the development of democratic government. The problem can be worked out only by the simple, natural process, always used by this American people, and by every thinking people, the bringing together of many minds, for common deliberation, in the popular conven-

tion, where the people can hear all sides of all questions, can think, and form its common judgment. What I hope to establish in this political study is that the meeting of the people in its national convention is now a pressing need.

Merely, therefore, as an individual contribution to public political discussion, merely for the purpose of showing that constitutional reorganization of some kind is needed, that there is something on which the people needs to think, and act—I have written this book.

In it I propose to consider—

I. The Definition of Democratic Government.

II. The Principles of Democratic Government.

III. Wherein our Government is not Democratic.

IV. The Form of a Democratic Government.

V. The Working of a Democratic Government.

VI. How our Government is to be Made Democratic.

CHAPTER I.

THE DEFINITION OF A DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT.

WHAT is a democratic government?

Before attempting to answer this question, it will be well to begin with some political definitions, and political axioms.

"A people," as I define the term, is any collection of individuals, it may be at the same time of smaller peoples, who have in some way grown to have common public interests, and a common public life. Every people, taken by itself, may be considered as a complete political organism; it may contain within itself many smaller peoples; at the same time it and its citizens may be part of a larger people. It may be an organism of the simplest form, as the people of a village or small town, composed of only individuals and families, comprising within itself no smaller political organism. Or it may be an organism of more complex form, composed not merely of individuals and families, but of smaller peoples—as the people of one of our large cities, or counties, or states,

or of a great nation. In the scale of political organisms, the individual may be considered, as it were, the single cell; and each people, with its different organs and members is a distinct body politic. As many individuals combine to form the small people of a village, town, or city, so many individuals and smaller peoples may combine, almost without limit, to form one greater people, a nation.

Every people, whether it be the people of a village, a town, a city, a state, or a great nation, has its own public affairs, in which all its different members have a common interest, and as to which there must be some kind of common administration. The administration of justice, popular education, the protection of the community against crime and pauperism, the construction and regulation of the public highways of thought and matter, are, as most reasonable men will agree, public affairs. Public affairs differ, with different peoples at the same time, and at different times with the same people. For instance, drainage, the supply of water, light, and air, the public health, in thinly populated rural districts may be often safely left to the private management of individuals. When, however, population becomes more dense, as in the larger towns and cities, the safety of each individ-

ual requires that those matters be put under a common public control; in other words, those matters then become properly public affairs. As to what particular matters are, at any one time, and with any one people, properly public affairs, individuals will always differ. That there are, with all peoples, and at all times, public affairs, thinking men will agree. Each people, too, the people of each village, town, city, county, state, and nation, has its own public affairs, which chiefly concern itself, and which should have, as a rule, a distinct, independent administration.

Each people, for the administration of its own public affairs, must have a government. By this term "government" I mean a special body of men, selected in some way, organized in some way, controlled in some way, who shall be specially charged with the actual administration of public affairs. The phrase "government by the people," taken in its broadest sense, does not mean that all the individuals, who taken together make up a people, are indiscriminately to have a hand in the actual administration of that people's public affairs. It means, at most, that each individual is to have one voice, in the selection and control of the body of men who are specially charged with that administration. Even in the smallest

village, if public work is to be well done, it must be in the hands of some one man, or body of men, specially selected for the doing of that work. In other words, every people must have a "government."

The common idea of a "democratic" government has generally rested on features of form rather than substance. In times past a government has generally been called "democratic," if only every man had the right, under the letter of the law, to cast a ballot, at short intervals of time, for a considerable number of public officials. The so-called democratic governments thus far framed have generally come into existence as the reactionary results of a revolution against the evils of some hereditary system. At one time and another in the history of the world, peoples who have suffered from the tyranny of hereditary kings have hastily assumed that if they had, under the letter of the law, the right to select their chief public servants, for short periods of service, by popular vote, they thereby secured a democratic government. They have regarded form, and not substance; the letter of the law, and not its actual working results.

Actual working results must constitute the standard by which we are to decide whether any

system of government is or is not truly democratic. It is not enough that the letter of the law gives the citizen the right to cast a ballot, if, in practice, the ballot is prepared for him by professional politicians. It is not enough that the people should have the possibility, at fixed periods of time, of changing the body of professional politicians who manage its so-called popular elections. Nor is a government made democratic by a declaratory resolution that all men are born free and equal. Actual working results must be the test.

A democratic government, then, as I shall define the term, is that political system which will best tend to secure, as far as any political system can, the following working results:

I. It must secure the most free and healthy political action of each individual.

That means, it must secure, as to each individual man, on every public question—

1. His one free voice.

One voice to every man, on every public question, is, as I believe, a point imperatively demanded by the highest interests of every highly developed society.

But the voice must be free.

2. His full weight.

Men must be weighed as well as counted. All men are not equal. They differ greatly, in honesty, in natural capacity, in training. The able and honest men ought to have more weight in the decision of public questions than the ignorant and dishonest. Each man must have his full weight.

3. His wisest action.

Individuals often act hastily, on insufficient information, and in passion. A political system which is to be a working success should not only give each man a voice in public affairs, but it must educate him. It must secure the wisest action of which the individual is capable.

As to the individual, then, a democratic government must secure three things—his one free voice, his full weight, and his wisest action.

II. It must secure the most free and healthy political action of each people.

That means, it must secure, as to each people—

1. Freedom.

Freedom of political action, for peoples, as well as individuals, is the first essential to a healthy political life. Every people that is to take political action, as to either measures or men, must be so organized, that it can form and utter its own

judgment and will. And in forming and uttering its judgment and will it must have freedom.

2. Its wisest action.

Peoples as well as individuals have feelings. Their feelings must be subordinated to their judgments. Those judgments will not always be wise. But a democratic system of government must secure from each people the wisest judgment of which that people is capable.

3. The will of each people in the administration of its own public affairs, must be supreme.

Peoples, as well as individuals, will at times act unwisely. They will have to bear the penalties which unwise action will, in the natural course of events, bring upon them. But, if their political organization is such as to allow them to think, and to use their own best judgment, their public action on their own public affairs will be, in general, wiser than the action of any outside authority. We must take our chance of having at times unwise action even at the hands of a people. But, with peoples, as with individuals, self-government is, in the long run, the only government that will give good results.

As to peoples, then, a democratic government must secure, for each people, its free action, its wis-

est action, and the supremacy of its own will in the administration of its own public affairs.

III. It must be the best government.

That is, it must make each people, the people of each town, city, state, and of the whole nation, one vigorous healthy working body for the doing its own public work, having its own organs and members — especially having its own brain. It must enable each people to manage its own public affairs, with the least possible waste of its strength, in accordance with its own wisest judgment.

To those ends the system must be so constituted as to secure, for each single people—

1. The best organization.

Organization, that is to say, the distribution of functions, the division of labor, among the different organs and members of the body politic, is the first essential to a wise, honest, and efficient administration of public affairs, and a healthy political life. With all bodies of men, great or small, if work of any kind is to be done quickly and well, there must be organization. Without organization, the best men can do little. With organization, comparatively inferior men can do much. The first requisite, then, in framing a successful, practical, political system is to secure for each

body politic, for each people, the best organization.

2. The best selection of individuals for its different organs and members.

We must not only have the different duties in the state rightly distributed, but we must secure the selection of the right individuals for the performance of those different duties. The right man in the right place is a maxim in politics, as in all other human affairs. For administration, we must have able administrators. For legislation, and the decision of questions of general public policy, we must have wise counsellors. Throughout the whole government, we must have fit men—that is, each man must be, as far as may be, fit for his special work.

Especially is this true as to the men at the head of each people's public service. All organizations of men depend for their working success mainly on the men at the head. Able and honest subordinates, of themselves, are of comparatively little value. If we have able, honest, and experienced men at the head of the public service, they will see to it that we have good subordinates. If the men at the head are not fit for their work, it matters little who the subordinates may be.

3. The best securities for the harmonious effi-

cient working, of each body politic, and its different organs and members.

Throughout each body politic each organ and member must be made to do well its own work, and the different organs and members must all work well together. Efficiency of each part, and the harmonious co-operation of all the parts, are essential to the accomplishing of results, with a people, as with any smaller organization of human beings.

A system of government, then, which is to be called democratic, must give, as to each people or body politic, the best organization of the body politic, the best selection of individuals for its different organs and members, and the best securities for the healthy action of each organ and member, and of the whole body.

If, now, any political system can be devised, that will secure, as to each individual, his one free voice, his full weight, and his wisest action, on every public question—as to each people, the supremacy in its own public affairs of its own will and wisest judgment—if at the same time the system will give to each people, or body politic, the best organization, the best selection of its different organs and members, and the best securities for the healthy vigorous action of all those organs and

members and of the whole body, such a system we might safely call a system of Democratic Government.

But does human experience, thus far, give us any light as to the principles on which such a system should be framed?

That is the question next to be considered.

CHAPTER II.

THE PRINCIPLES OF DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT.

The political experience of the human race, and especially of the people of these United States, has now established, as it seems to me, the soundness of certain principles of democratic government.

These principles may be classified into principles relating to—

A. The Organ of the People's Will.

B. The Organization of the Government.

C. The Selection of its Organs and Members.

D. Its Securities.

The principles will be considered in the order here given.

We are first to consider the principles which relate to

A. The Organ of the People's Will.

How is a people to think, and form its judgment? How is a people to form and utter its will?

For it will be found that the political action of any people must necessarily be limited to the

forming its judgment, and uttering its will. Action, the carrying that will into effect, a people must always intrust to its hand, to single men, specially selected, by the people, for administration.

The principles relating to the forming of a people's judgment and will, to such political action as can ever be taken by a people, are as follows:

PRINCIPLE I.—The Public Meeting is the Organ of a People's Thought and Will.

The meaning of this principle is this:

Every people that is to take common action, as to either men or measures, must meet in one body, and act as one body, in the persons, either of its own individual citizens, or of their elected representatives. If the numbers of the people be not too large, its individual citizens must all meet and act in one body. That would be the case with the small peoples, which have a population of not more than twenty-five hundred or thereabouts, which would make the number of voting citizens about five hundred. If, however, the numbers of a people be too large to allow its individual citizens all to meet and act in one body in their own persons, then they must meet and act in the persons of their elected representatives; and, in the election of those representatives, the individual citizens in

the small primary districts must meet and act in one body, at the time, and in the act, of electing the representatives. At each stage of a people's action, from the primary action by the individual citizens, in the primary districts, to the final action by the representative body which is to meet and act for the whole people, the organ used for any action by a people, must be the popular assembly.

This principle, especially in its application to the process of popular election, to popular action in the selection of men, I believe to be essential to the existence of true democratic government. As to action on measures, the soundness of the principle is, in practice, generally conceded. Popular action on measures, most men will agree, must be taken in a public meeting, of only a reasonably large number of men, where discussion can be had, where principles and details can be carefully considered, where new measures can be brought forward, and amended, at the time when action is to be taken. But the principle is equally sound as to action on men. And it is as to action on men, that the principle has its chief practical importance. For the functions of the individual citizen, and the direct action of the people, under any system of democratic government that can possibly be framed, are mainly limited to the selection of

men, by the process of popular election. If, then, the principle has any value at all, its chief value is to be found in its application to the process of popular election.

The consideration of the principle will be easier, if we first take an illustration of what would be its working in this process of popular election. Take first the case of the election of the public officers of a village or small town, with a population of about two thousand, which would give about four hundred voting citizens. The individual citizens would meet in their own persons, and vote directly for the officials to be chosen. Take the case of a large city, with a population of half a million, which would mean about one hundred thousand voting citizens. If the city were divided into primary election districts of two hundred and fifty voters each, there would be four hundred primary districts. The citizens in each primary district would meet in one body, and elect their one representative. The four hundred representatives thus elected would meet in one body, and elect the public officers. In cases where the number of citizens who were to vote was very large, it would at times be necessary to have another grade of intermediate electoral bodies (or possibly even more than one), to elect the members of the final electoral body

which should choose the public officers. To illustrate: Suppose the officer to be chosen were a President of the United States. Suppose, for mere arithmetical convenience, that the entire population was fifty millions, which would give, under a system of universal manhood suffrage, about ten millions of voting citizens. Suppose the number of members of the final electoral body which was to choose the President to be four hundred. That would give one member of this final electoral body to each twenty-five thousand voters. Suppose, then, the number of individual voting citizens in each primary district to be on the average two hundred and fifty. That would give one hundred primary districts to each larger district which was to elect one member of the final electoral body. The practical working of such an election, then, would be this: The individual citizens in each primary district would meet in one body and elect their one representative; the one hundred representatives thus chosen, in each large district, would meet in one body, and elect one member of the final electoral body; the four hundred members of that final electoral body would then meet in one body, and choose the President.

The grounds on which the soundness of this principle rests are these:

1. It is essential in order to secure to each individual citizen his free voice.

Even in the case of the smallest people, the people of a small town or village, if the citizens do not meet, if they cast their votes separately, then every citizen is compelled, in practice, if he does not wish to vote in the air, if he wishes his vote to count, to cast his vote for a man or measure that is put forward and supported beforehand by some strong existing organization. The larger the people, the less free will be the citizen's action. Take the case of the election of public officials by the people of a large city, or a state, or a nation. If the citizens vote separately, directly for the public officer to be chosen, the citizen in one town must not only vote with other citizens in the same town, but with citizens in other towns, in other cities, and in other states. The larger the district through which the election is to be had, the larger and more thorough must be the organization for naming and supporting candidates. The work of these great state and national election organizations, which are formed for the purpose of carrying elections, becomes very large and costly. It requires large amounts of time, labor, and money. It becomes very intricate. It requires great skill and experience. The time, labor, and money are far greater

than the ordinary citizen can afford to give. The skill and experience are far greater than the ordinary citizen can hope to gain. The work, naturally, necessarily, and surely, falls into the hands of men who make the work of carrying elections their regular profession. With those professionals the ordinary citizen can never compete. The experiment has been often tried, and has always failed. The practical result is, whatever be the letter of the law, that the individual citizen is substantially compelled to cast his vote for some man nominated beforehand by some powerful organization of professional politicians. His action is not free.

If, however, the citizens meet, at the time when the people is to act, then the individual citizen will have something that can be correctly called freedom of political action. Take the instance of an election by the people of a small town. All individuals, who are to take common action, must combine. If all the citizens meet, when they are to act, then they will at least have a fair opportunity, at the time when they act, to combine freely. I assume that, whenever action is to be taken by any people, there will always be some individuals who may wish to shape that action to serve their own personal ends. I assume that

those individuals will combine beforehand, to control the action of the people. If, however, all the citizens meet in one body, at the time when their common action is to be taken, ordinary citizens will have at least the best opportunity they can have, to meet combinations made beforehand for personal ends with combinations made at the time for public ends. Every citizen will have the best opportunity he can have, at the time when the people is to act, to bring forward new names and new measures. And every citizen will have his free choice from a reasonable number of those names and measures. But take the case of a larger people. If the citizens in the small primary district meet in one body to elect a representative, then every citizen will have the best opportunity he can have, to propose any one he may wish to be that representative. Every citizen will have at least a free choice from all those men then proposed. In the choice of the representative, then, each citizen will have a substantially free voice. If, afterwards, the representatives so chosen meet in one body to elect the public official, then, up to the last moment, any number of candidates for the office to be filled by election can be proposed. Each single representative will have what may be correctly called freedom of action. I do not yet

say that the result will be the best possible result. But whatever other results may or may not be accomplished, at least this one result will be accomplished; every individual citizen will have had something more than a choice between the men or measures proposed beforehand by two or three powerful organizations. His action will have been comparatively free.

Can any system be devised under which it will be more free?

2. It is essential in order to secure to each individual his full weight.

Under a free democratic government the individual citizen is entitled to something more than the right to cast his own vote. He must have the opportunity to influence, by free, fair, public argument, the votes of other men.

If we have the public meeting of citizens, at the time when the citizens are to vote, then each man can, not only cast his own vote, and propose his own men and measures, but he can have a hearing with his fellow-men. He can have this hearing, at the time when the people is to act, on the precise question on which action is to be taken. Bear in mind that the men in each primary district will meet together time after time, year after year. They will come to know one another. Character and ability

will, in time, tell. Men of strong minds, who have sound ideas, who can speak, to the point, forcibly, and clearly, will come to have influence with their fellows. The able and honest men will, in time, as a rule, control the action of the primary meeting of citizens. Dishonest men will become known, and will not have power. Here is the solution of the point so often raised as to giving ignorant men the same weight in public affairs with men of intelligence. I do not advocate democratic government on any high-sounding declaration that all men are born free and equal. Men are not born equal. Men do not become equal after they are born. Men are very unequal, in natural power, in acquired capacity, and in honesty. The man who is honest and able should have greater weight in public affairs than the man who is dishonest and ignorant. He will get it, if citizens habitually meet for common political action. It is mainly in order to enable able and honest men to have their full weight in public affairs that it is necessary to have the popular assembly as the organ for all popular action. The able and honest men in every society are, as a rule, busy men. They are busy for the reason that their services are in demand. They cannot give large amounts of time to the discharge of the ordinary public duties of the citizen. If,

however, all the citizens meet, when they are to take public action, then every man will have a fair opportunity to influence the action of his fellow-citizens, by the expenditure of only a reasonable amount of time, in a fair, open, honest way, in the public discussion of public men and public measures. It is not necessary that men should be skilled or experienced orators. In the meeting of ordinary citizens, nothing weighs like the clear common-sense of successful, practical men. And the men who are successful, are, in the long run, the men who are able and honest. These men, if we use the public meeting, of all the citizens, at all times, for all popular action, on men and measures, will control popular action. They will be the controlling power in forming and uttering the people's will.

If this be not so, then the whole theory of democratic government is false, and we had best abandon it.

But without the public meeting, the best men in the community lose their due weight, and the worst elements of society gain an undue weight. The management of these great organizations for carrying elections naturally, necessarily, and surely, falls into the hands of the worse class of citizens. The time which is required for doing the work of those organizations is given by the men who have time

to spare; in the main, by men who are unemployed for the reason that they have not shown themselves to be honest and industrious. The men who do this great mass of election work are largely recruited from the adventurers and criminal classes of society. As a rule, capable men are too busy. Their time is too valuable. There are, no doubt, many very respectable and honest men in the ranks of the professional politicians. But in all the large cities the professional criminals are nearly all professional politicians. In the practical work of making nominations and carrying elections in the city of New York, it is a fact that the keepers of grog-shops and gambling-houses have more real power than respectable business and professional men. So it will necessarily be under any political system which compels the use of large standing organizations for the purpose of carrying elections, and which therefore makes demands on the time of the busy individual citizen which are greater than he can afford to give.

3. It is essential in order to secure from each individual his wisest action.

The education of the individual citizen must be secured, as far as may be, on every public question on which he is to act as one of the people. This education of the individual citizen can best be

had in the public meeting. It cannot be fully attained without the public meeting. Let it be again borne in mind, that the individual citizen will in the public meeting continually hear, and have at least some opportunity to take part in, the free public discussion of public questions of many kinds. When he is to take part in the election of a representative or a public officer, there will be, at the time, public discussion as to the fitness for the office of the very man on whom he is to vote. When he is to vote on public measures, there will be free public discussion on the precise measure on which he is to give his voice. He will have something very different from glowing histories of the brilliant past records of great election organizations. The discussion will be on the fitness of present individual men, and individual measures. Under any political system that deserves the name of democratic government, the individual citizen should do something more than surrender his judgment to professional politicians. He should use it himself—on the precise question on which he acts. He should use it after it is enlightened by hearing the views of other men—of men of other ways of thinking than his own. It will be possible for him to do that, if he has the opportunity to confer with his fellow-citizens, at the time when he is to

cast his vote. The public meeting of the citizens in the primary district will be, in short, the primary school in politics. It will be a school where the citizen will do something more than inquire who has in former times been loyal to some great election organization.

If, however, we do not use this organ of the public meeting, all individual citizens who wish to vote at all, will in practice, as a rule, habitually follow some election organization, instead of educating and using their own individual judgments. Most men will, unless under great provocation, adhere loyally to one election organization. That is human nature. Indeed it is an open question how far any individual has the right to take part in the preliminary action of these great organizations in selecting candidates, and afterwards vote against those candidates. Whatever may be the right or the wrong of that question, it is certain that most men will in practice uniformly act with their one organization, and substantially surrender their individual freedom of judgment.

Can there be a doubt that the public meeting of citizens is indispensable to secure from each individual citizen his wisest action on public questions?

4. The public meeting, thus used, is essential

in order to enable a people to form and utter its own will.

Wherever common action is to be taken by any number of individuals greater than one, the first step to be taken is for them to agree, as to the thing to be done, and the man or men to do it. In other words, they must agree, as to measures and men. It is the same with peoples and public questions, as with individuals and private questions. I assume, that, as to all public questions individuals will differ. Each individual man will have his own individual opinion, as to what work is to be done, and as to the best way to do it. But in order that a people can do anything, it will be necessary that individuals should make concessions, should harmonize their differences of opinion. Before any common action can be taken by a people, the individuals who compose the people must in some way come to an agreement.

By what method, then, can a people most easily and quickly agree?

The public meeting is nature's own method, simple, old, easy, and speedy. If individuals who have common interests, can only meet, face to face, if they can have a full and free opportunity to confer, to hear one another's views, to change their own views, to propose new measures, and to

amend them, they will, if they are reasonable men, in due time, come to an agreement. If they are not reasonable men, if they still belong to the savage stage of existence, they will have to use savage methods, separate into mobs and armies, and fight, until one mob or army is beaten or destroyed. But if the citizens of a people be in the main reasonable beings, they will, by the process of the public meeting, be enabled almost always to come to an agreement, on any public question. They may and often will keep their individual opinions. But they will agree, on some common course of action.

This is not a theory, or a mere individual opinion. It has been well proved in all the practical affairs of human life. This old organ, the public meeting, the parliament, the convention, which we find in the old Hebrew records, in Homer, in old England, in New England, which we find among all reasoning races, in all reasoning ages, is the organ which has always been used, and is the only organ which can be used, for the purpose of enabling any large number of individuals to come to a common decision, as to any common course of action. It seldom fails to accomplish its end. Wherever individual citizens have only the ordinary diversities of individual interest, I do not

believe that it has ever failed. No doubt, if the political system of any people is such as to divide its citizens into two great armies, who engage every year in a struggle for political mastery, the machinery would be put to a severe strain. Even then, however, if men can only have time, if they can only have the opportunity to allow a certain amount of angry feeling to find vent in words, they will seldom fail, in the end, to agree on practical measures.

The will of a people can be formed only through this organ of the public meeting. The will of a people is a thing by itself, a thing different from the will of any individual, or class of individuals —it is a new growth, brought into existence by conference, by the meeting of minds. In general, the single individual will not, of himself, see all sides of a question. In the public meeting he can at least hear all sides. He goes through, at the time, a process of education. He finds out, if he be intelligent and reasonable, his own ignorance. He soon learns, if not his own errors, that it is necessary for him to make concessions, if any practical results are to be accomplished. Concessions are made. The practical men, the men of broad, many-sided views, suggest measures which generally, in time, command the assent of the greater num-

ber. The result in the end is agreement. Oftentimes the measure on which the meeting will agree, is a measure which in the beginning would have commanded the assent of but few individuals. But most of the individuals understand the necessity of agreeing on something, and they agree as they best can. The final outcome is, not the will of any one man, or class of men; it is a new growth—something that can be correctly called the will of that assembly of men. That is what always happens, whenever any body of individuals meets, to decide on a common course of action. The wisdom of the action will, of course, depend on the wisdom of the individuals. But the action, when taken, is the action, not of the individuals, but of the meeting.

The most signal recorded instance, of which I am aware in all political history, of this process of growth, of this forming and uttering of the will of a people, through the meeting of individual minds, is to be found in the proceedings of the Convention of 1787 that framed our National Constitution. It is a most remarkable instance of the process of agreement, on a new thing, which was, at the beginning, in the mind of no one man, which was, at the end, what no one man wished —to which however that assembly of men agreed

—not because any one of them thought their common action in all respects wise, but for the reason that they could agree on nothing else. That result was accomplished by conference. The men who met in that convention were men whose individual opinions were as different as men's opinions well could be, not only as to matters of detail, but as to matters of general principle. They met. They had their differences of opinion. They conferred. They made concessions. They came to an agreement.

The recorded evidence of the quickness of the growth which took place in that convention is most interesting. When that body of men first came together, it is safe to say, that no one of them had in his mind even a dim conception of the Constitution which the convention finally framed. Single men had no doubt thought that it was necessary to have some kind of a common government for all the thirteen States. But few men had advanced even so far as that. The resolutions for calling the convention contemplated nothing but a revision of the old Articles of Confederation. The resolutions said, in so many words, that the convention was to meet "for the "sole and express purpose of revising the Articles "of Confederation." But the old Confederation

lacked every essential feature of a government. There was under it no power which could make or enforce a law, or which could raise a man or a dollar for any public service. There was, indeed, a body called a Congress, which had, on paper, the power to appoint a commander-in-chief for an army which it could not raise, to spend money from a treasury which it could not fill, to create a debt which it could not pay, and to make requests for men and money which it could not enforce. In fact, the only substantial power it had was the power to manufacture a paper currency. The old Continental Congress was a grumbling club, which spent its time in talk, in moaning over evils which it had no power to heal, and in well-meaning, mischievous interference with the commander of the army, whom it had no power to help. It was always asking questions, and passing resolutions. And it was "to revise the Articles of Confederation," to mend a rope of sand, that that convention was called. Most of its members had in the beginning no higher idea of the work it was to do.

That idea they outgrew before the convention began its formal deliberations. The informal conferences of the few days in which they were waiting for a quorum were enough to bring them to a

sense that they must go far beyond the scope of the resolutions which brought them together and defined their duties. The convention was originally called for the 14th of May. Its first meeting was held on the 25th. The first day of its formal deliberations was the 30th. On that day the convention passed a resolution in these words: "That "a *national government* ought to be established, "consisting of a *supreme legislative executive and* "*judiciary.*" That was the growth of the informal conversations of only a few days. As to one individual we have an actual record of the change of his ideas. Edmund Randolph says: "Before my "departure for the convention, I believed that the "confederation was not so eminently defective as "it had been supposed. But after I had entered "into a *free communication with those who were* "*best informed* of the condition and interest of "each state, after I had compared the intelligence "derived from them with the properties which "ought to characterize the government of our "Union, I *became persuaded* that the confedera-"tion was *destitute of every energy which a consti-"tution of the United States ought to possess.*"

Agreement as to this one general point, that there should be a "supreme" national government, was, as we have seen, a result very quickly

reached. The working out of details was the thing that took time. The practical application of what men call general principles is always the thing of difficulty. Yet even this result was soon accomplished. Four months—for framing a comprehensive, harmonious system of national government, for thirteen independent states, under which a great people should come into existence, and carry on their national growth for one hundred years — can all recorded history show anything equal to it? Constitutions, they say, cannot be made, they must grow. This one grew in a single summer. No doubt the soil was ready for the seed.

The process was nature's process—the process of natural selection, by the agreement of minds, from the ideas of single individuals, and the combining the results of that selection, by the same process of agreement, into a new, complete form. It was precisely the same process that goes on in every meeting of individuals, in every committee-room, in the deliberations of every jury, in every town meeting, in every assembly where individuals come together to decide on a common course of action.

I have said that in the end, the result reached was not one which any one individual wholly approved. That is shown most clearly by the record

of the speeches of different men—when the constitution was finally adopted.

Franklin said:

"Thus I consent, sir, to the constitution *because* "*I expect no better*,* and because I am not sure it "is not the best. The opinions I have had of its "errors I sacrifice to the public good. I have "never whispered a syllable of them abroad. Within these walls they were born, and here they shall "die."

Gouverneur Morris said:

" . . that he too had objections, but considering the present plan as the *best that was to be attained*, he should *take it with all its faults*. The "majority had determined in its favor, and *by that* "*determination he should abide*. The moment "this plan goes forth, all other considerations will "be laid aside, and the great question will be, shall "there be a national government, or not? And "this must take place, or a general anarchy will "be the alternative."

Hamilton said:

"No man's ideas were more remote from the "plan than his own were known to be; but is it "possible to deliberate between anarchy, and con-

* The italics in these extracts are mine.

"vulsion, on one side, and the *chance* of good to "be expected from the plan, on the other?"

The letter to Congress which accompanied the Constitution said, among other things:

"That it will meet the full and entire approba-"tion of every state is not, perhaps, to be expect-"ed. But each will doubtless consider, that, had "her interest alone been consulted, the conse-"quences might have been particularly disagreea-"ble and injurious to others. That it is liable to "as few exceptions as could reasonably have been "expected, we *hope* and believe; that it may pro-"mote the lasting welfare of that country so dear "to us all, and secure her freedom and happiness "is our most ardent wish."

Three of the members who attended the meetings of the convention throughout were so strongly opposed to the Constitution, even after the convention had adopted it, that they refused to sign their names to it.

But it may be said, that was a very exceptional body of men; they met under very exceptional circumstances; we cannot deduce principles for general political action from the action of that body of men at that time.

On the contrary, that was not an exceptional body of men, viewed as a body of men chosen by

the free will of a free people. It was just such a body of men as the people of these United States would choose to represent them to-day, if its choice were free, if it were not split up into factions, and barred from taking free action; if it were only so organized that it could form and utter its own judgment, and its own will, in the simple natural method. As to this present point, this point of agreement, those men in that convention did only what reasonable men have done in all ages, when they have come together in an ordinarily reasonable frame of mind. I concede, that, if the whole community, by the overpowering pressure of a continual struggle for political power, is divided into two great factions, with each of which the chief article of faith is fear and distrust of the other, agreement on a common course of action becomes a difficult, and at times an almost impossible, thing. If, at the time when that convention met, there had been two great national organizations, who were each year engaged in a struggle for office, I much doubt if the constitution could have been framed. But, as to this point, affairs were then in a comparatively normal condition. Some men wished a strong national government. Others feared it. Individuals had their differences of opinion, and in spite of those differences came

to an agreement, on a constitution. If men are firmly bound in the fetters of old political creeds, no doubt the growth of a common will, which must always be free in order to be quick and healthy, takes place under disadvantages. But if we have the right organ to make that growth, the growth will come. It came then. It would come now, under normal conditions.

This free conference, in the public meeting, is the only process by which this forming of the will of a people can be had. If citizens do not meet, the people will simply in one way or another approve the will of the leaders of some great faction. It will not form a will of its own.

5. The public meeting is the only organ by which a people can form and utter its own judgment.

In order that a people should form its own judgment it must have the opportunity for its own free thought.

Free public discussion is the only process by which a people can think. And free public discussion can be had only in the public meeting. Let any man devise any other organ, or any other process, if he can. The process of thought, in a people, differs from the process of thought in an individual mainly in this: When a people thinks, in

its public meeting, it is pretty certain to see all sides of a question. One man brings up one point, another another. If the meeting only takes time, it is nearly certain that all the most important considerations bearing on the subject under discussion will be brought forward, and weighed. If the matter on which the people is to act be the selection of a measure, all the important bearings of the measure, as far as ordinary human intelligence can see them, will pretty certainly be seen. If the question before the people be the selection of a man for some public service, all matters which have any proper connection with the fitness of that particular man for that particular service will pretty certainly be debated. Debate will be open. As a rule, it will be orderly and decorous. In the end, the people will form a judgment. That judgment may not be the wisest possible judgment. It will, however, be the judgment of that people. If, however, the people does not meet, the people cannot think. Its individual citizens may express their individual preferences for the men or the policy of a faction. But we shall not get the judgment of that people.

6. The public meeting is the organ which will best enable a people to form and utter its wisest judgment.

I am speaking now of a people that is fit for democratic government, that is capable of thinking. As to any people that has not yet reached that stage of growth when it can think for itself, when it will demand for itself the control of its own affairs, the question of democratic government is not a question of practical politics.

Assuming, then, that a people has grown to be a thinking people, and is capable of forming its own judgment, by some process, then I say the public meeting is the organ which it must use to form its wisest judgment. I do not say that the judgment which any people will form by means of the public meeting will always be the wisest judgment that can possibly be formed. But it will be the wisest judgment that can be formed by that people.

Let us consider:

If the process of forming the judgment of the people be one which will give to each individual a reasonably free selection from a reasonably large number of men and measures; if it will give to each individual his full weight, and will secure from each individual his wisest action; if, at the same time, it will secure to the people as full freedom as is practicable in thinking, in coming to an agreement, can there be any method which

will more probably secure that people's wisest action?

If the considerations thus far brought forward be sound, then the public meeting is the organ most certain to accomplish that result. Can there be any reasonable doubt that it is more certain to accomplish that result than the system of separate voting by individuals, without the opportunity of common conference and common thought?

The fundamental reason why the public meeting tends to secure wise action is that it brings together men of all degrees of diversity of opinion, and that it requires concession, and agreement, before they can come to a decision. Truth, when men differ, as a rule, lies at neither extreme. In such cases the necessity of conference, and of agreement, tends to secure, in the large majority of cases, the wisest results. This necessity of agreement tends to eliminate the errors of individual judgment. The result of the agreement is, in general, wiser than would be the action of any one individual, or of any single class of individuals.

Especially is this the case where the single individuals who meet for common action are carefully selected men, as will ordinarily be the case with the members of any popular assembly who have been selected by the agreement of other prelimi-

nary popular bodies. The men so selected will, in general, be men who have been successful, men who have made their success by their ability and their honesty, and their capacity for working well with other men. When an assembly of such men meets for common action, the process of agreement is comparatively easy, and comparatively certain to bring good results. The thought of each individual will be stimulated by the contact with other minds. The certainty of criticism from other men will make the individual cautious in weighing his own thoughts before he utters them. The judgment of other men as to the soundness of the thought of each individual will generally be wiser than his own. Individual interests will neutralize one another. In the end the common judgment, after common conference, reached by the process of agreement, will be, almost certainly, a wiser judgment than the judgment of any individual, or of any class.

The common judgment of any such representative body will be the selected thought of selected men. It will be, as nearly as human organization can make it so, the people's wisest judgment, the result of organized co-operative thought, a result evolved by the process of natural selection, the survival of the fittest from the struggle of ideas.

But it may be said, many men are ignorant and easily influenced, and are more easily influenced by designing demagogues than they are by men who are wise and honest. I have not yet said that men who are ignorant or unwise should be allowed a voice in public affairs. Thus far I have spoken only of citizens—of those who have the right under the laws to take part in popular action. Thus far the position is nothing but this, that the citizens, those who are allowed a voice in forming and uttering the will of the people, will be better able to form the people's wisest judgment by using the organ of the public meeting than by any other process.

Let me again call attention to the actual working of this principle in the Constitutional Convention of 1787. The debates of the convention show the widest diversity of individual views, and a great deal of very crude thought. The final result was reached in this way: although a majority of the members early came to the conclusion that the States needed a national government of some kind, yet no two of them were then agreed as to what kind of a government that national government should be. When they came to decide that question, when they came to take action on details, as to what specific powers this new govern-

ment should have, then there appeared differences of opinion that it seemed hopeless to attempt to harmonize. The members proceeded to discuss and decide single points. Some men were in favor of establishing a government with very large powers; others were in favor of limiting those powers very narrowly. Action was taken separately as to each specific clause of the Constitution. The dividing line between the members was not always the same: men who would vote in favor of giving the new government one power would vote against giving it some other power. In the end each specific clause had been carried by the vote of a majority. But that majority had not been always the same. Each member found in the finished instrument many clauses to which he was strongly opposed. Such was the condition of members' minds that, even at the end, it was with great difficulty that a majority vote was obtained in favor of the whole paper, although there had been a majority vote in favor of each single section of it. In the end the Constitution was adopted only because a majority of the members believed that it was necessary that they should agree on something, and they found it possible to agree on nothing else. Now, can any reasonable man doubt that that final result was a wise one?

And why was it so wise?

The popular assembly, nature's own organ for popular action, gave the natural product—the people's wisest judgment—wiser than the wisdom of its wisest single men.

7. But is this system of the public meeting a practical system?

Is it anything more than a scheme on paper?

Let us examine it.

Every scheme of political organization, even the drawing of an ordinary statute, must, in its first stage, be a scheme on paper, if it be carefully considered. All that we can possibly do, in the first instance, is to draft a scheme on paper, turn it around, look as far as we can on all its bearings, make it as perfect as we can, and then—try it. We are here engaged in the first stage. Let us see, as far as we can, what will be the practical working of this system of the public meeting. And let us examine it mainly in the light of political history.

The system has been tried, tried for ages. It has, whenever it has been tried by ordinarily honest and reasonable men, worked well.

Only two systems, be it noted, are possible for this process of forming and uttering the will of a people: the one is the system of having the indi-

vidual citizens vote, without the public meeting, in their own persons, directly on the man or measure on which the people is to act; the other is the system of having the citizens meet, either in their own persons, or in the persons of their representatives, and act as a body.

Any system of political organization which is to be practical must be simple.

Which of the two systems is the more simple? Compare them.

With the system of the public meeting, all the citizens in each primary district, once in each year (oftener, if there be need), will meet in one body. The citizens will be enrolled. The roll will be called. After the meeting is organized, if any national officers are to be chosen, nominations will be made, on the spot, by any citizen who sees fit to make them, for a representative, to attend an electoral convention, and cast the vote of that primary district in that convention; and a representative will be elected, for that purpose. In the same way, if any state officials are to be chosen, a representative will be elected to an electoral body for choosing state officials. In the same way, a representative will be chosen to represent that district in a representative body, to act on county or city men and measures. The meeting will then pro-

ceed to take action on local affairs, whatever they may be; it will choose local officials, pass local laws and ordinances, hear official reports as to local public work done, and vote the local taxes and appropriations. The day for holding the primary assemblies will be, as election day now is, a legal holiday. The citizens will meet in the morning; take the whole day for doing their work, if the whole day is needed; more than one day, if more be needed. Ordinarily, one day, or less, will do the work of the citizen. The different electoral conventions will then do their work of electing officers.

Now, consider the working of the system under which the citizens vote separately, in their own persons, through large districts, without the machinery of the representative public meeting, casting their votes directly for the public officers to be chosen. Bear in mind, too, that the evils of great elections by large numbers of unorganized citizens have not yet been fully felt. With a citizenship of only about ten millions in these United States, and the magnitude of election organization which necessarily results therefrom, the evils are great enough. But they have not, even now, fully developed. A large number of conventions must be held beforehand to make nominations; there

must be district conventions, town conventions, city conventions, county conventions, state conventions, and national conventions. There must be a separate series of conventions for each election organization; else there can be no concerted action, and no result. Candidates must be nominated. There will then be a great campaign, political meetings, bands of music, processions, circulars, election committees, and millions of ballots to be printed. After all that is over, then will come the distribution of ballots, requiring the services of thousands of men, and the counting and declaring of the vote.

Is there any comparison between the two systems for simplicity and ease of working? This machinery of the public meeting is nothing but an adaptation of the system of representation to the old simple machinery of the town meeting—which men have used at all times, and in all lands.

It is to be noted, that with this system of the representative public meeting, the security against fraudulent voting, or fraudulent counting of the vote, is made, by the simplicity of the system, as thorough as it well can be. Men in the same neighborhood would regularly meet together, and be well known to one another. With a registra-

tion of the citizens and a call of the register, voting by any persons not entitled to vote would be made as difficult as it could well be made. The voting will, when desired, be done on a call of the roll. The voting, the counting of the vote, and the declaration of the vote, would be done at one and the same time, in the presence of the whole meeting. Every citizen would be, in his own person, an inspector of election. He would, at one meeting, take part in all the processes, of nomination, election, and the declaration of the result.

The system would be, too, much less costly than the one of separate voting. The citizens themselves would meet only once. There would be one series of meetings of representatives to elect national officials, one for state officials, one for county officials, and one for the officials of large cities or towns.

Is it possible to devise any system for popular action, which will afford so thorough security against fraud, which will be so inexpensive, which will put the ordinary citizen so nearly on a fair footing with the men who give especial attention to shaping popular action, and which would be so simple?

I say, then, that this organ of the popular assembly, used at every stage of popular action, for the

selection of men as well as measures, is the one best fitted to secure, for the individual citizen, his one free voice, his full weight, and his wisest action; it is also the one best fitted to secure, as to the people, the forming and uttering of its own will and wisest judgment; it is, too, simple and practical.

Can as much be said for any other method of obtaining a declaration of the people's judgment and will?

PRINCIPLE II.—In the Public Meeting Every Man must have One Voice.

Universal manhood suffrage is, in my belief, an essential to democratic government.

It needs not to be said that every people should have the power, for sufficient cause, to deprive any individual of his voice in public affairs. But, subject to the exercise of that power, it is my belief, that each adult male should have, on every public question, in his own person, or in the person of his representative, his one voice.

The grounds on which this proposition rests are the following:

1. It is necessary for the healthy political life of the individual.

For the political education of the individual, I

can imagine no influence so strong and so healthful as the habit of taking part, regularly and often, in the free, open consideration of public questions. It is not necessary that each individual should himself speak. If he is able to speak fitly, other men will wish to hear him, and they will generally make him speak. If he cannot himself speak fitly, he will be able at least to hear other men who can. As a rule, the men whom he will hear will be the men who can say something worth the hearing. Can any scheme be devised which will have so valuable an influence as a political educator of the individual as the giving him the right to be present, and to take his own part, whatever that part may be, in the action of the people's meeting?

2. It is necessary to secure the wisest action of the people.

Every people, especially the people of the small primary districts, under any political system, will be greatly influenced in their public action, and will be often controlled, by leaders.

For the wise selection of those leaders, I know of no system so certain, in the long run, to secure good results, as that of selection by the whole people, provided always that that selection be made by proper methods. By the term "the whole

people" in this connection, I mean all the men who collectively make up that people. This selection of leaders, if it be made by all the men of a community, will generally be made, not wholly, or mainly, on the knowledge that each individual has as to the real character of the men for whom he gives his vote, but on reputations. Those reputations will, in general, be true indices of men's real characters. In order to have those reputations and characters correctly weighed, I know of no method so certain as the agreement of a majority of all the men in the community, provided that agreement be free, with due opportunity for public consideration. Bear in mind that the function of the individual citizen in the state is, in the main, limited to the selection of men. It is almost certain that no man can succeed in getting a majority of voices in a free public meeting where public discussion can be had, unless he be a man well known. In other words, he will, in general, be a man who has achieved some kind of success. It will, moreover, be seldom that any free public meeting will vote for a man who is not believed to be honest and public-spirited; and as to the real fact, whether he is honest and public-spirited, I know of no test so sure as his being able to command the free support of a large number of the

members of the community in which he lives. As to these points of ability, honesty, and public spirit, my belief is that the best security in selecting men for high public place is to be found in the process of universal manhood suffrage, always provided that this process is used within its natural limits. Those limits will be considered hereafter.

Especially, in the securing to each man his full weight in the people's councils, is universal manhood suffrage, in my belief, the best security we can have. It is often said that the voice of the intelligent man should count for more than the voice of the ignorant man, and that for that reason ignorant men should not be allowed to vote. I submit, on the contrary, that the voice of the intelligent man should not count for more, but it should have the greater weight. The surest method for giving it greater weight is, in my belief, to give him the opportunity to influence other men who are not so intelligent as he is. This opportunity he will best secure by giving every man a vote. No plan, as I believe, can be devised that is so sure in the end to give due weight in public affairs to the men who best deserve it, provided our political organization is rightly framed in other respects. Restricting the right to vote by

a property qualification I do not believe to be for the best interests either of the poor or the rich. The rich and strong will, under any political system, have great power. If we limit the suffrage by a property qualification, their power will be too great, for the good of the state, or of themselves. It is not for the best interest of any class of men that they should have an undue weight in public affairs. If we give every man one voice in public affairs, the influence of the rich and strong, that is, of the best men among them, will still be the controlling interest in the state. I do not say that the giving every man a voice in public affairs will, in every single instance, secure a people's wisest action. I do say that no other general rule will be so certain, in the long run, to secure the wisest selection of a people's leaders, and thus to secure the wisest action of that people.

Especially in the administration of the affairs of the larger peoples, the peoples of large cities, of states, and of the nation, I am unable to see how any system will so certainly secure wise action as the system of universal suffrage — if the whole people can only meet, and act freely and deliberately. In all such cases the citizens will act in the persons of representatives. Those representatives will be selected men. Those selected men will

be, in the large majority of instances, better men than can be selected by any other method.

But the voice of the individual citizen must be an open voice, and not a secret ballot. Responsibility in government should begin with the responsibility of the individual citizen. His action, as well as that of public servants, should be open and above-board. Star-chamber methods have no place in democratic government, at any of its stages, in any of its processes. The action of the individual citizen should be public, taken in the face of his fellows. It is said that men who are poor and weak, unless they can be protected by secrecy of voting, will not dare to vote on their own convictions, but will vote on the dictates of their employers, and of men on whom they are dependent for their work and food. If that be so, then the best way to correct the evil is to have the people know who are the men who yield to such influences, and who are the men who use them. We must give to the poor and weak the means of finding out their own strength, the strength of numbers. We must give to men who are able and honest the means of finding out who are the public enemies, who are the men who use improper public influences. Open voting is the best security for honest voting. Parliamentary minis-

ters are not the only men in the state who should be compelled to defend their public conduct. The ordinary citizen, in his individual action, must be, at the time he is to act, open to free public criticism. He must be responsible, to the public opinion of the community, for his public action.

3. Universal suffrage is necessary in order to secure the healthy action of the body politic.

No state can long be at peace, or can secure the cordial co-operation of the whole people, where any considerable number of men are deprived of their voice in public affairs.

In order to have government a practical success, it is necessary, not only that public men should be wise men, and that public measures should be wise measures, but those men and measures must command public confidence, and be backed by the hearty good-will of the whole people.

To secure this public confidence, and this good-will of the people, no system can be efficient other than the giving every man his one voice in the public meeting. Whatever may be the policy of a government, that policy will have the greatest certainty it can have for commanding the cordial support of a people, if every man in that people is conscious that he has had his one free voice in deciding that policy.

Can any other system be devised that will be so certain to produce this result?

PRINCIPLE III.—In the Public Meeting Action must be Taken on only One Man or One Measure at One Time.

This means especially, that there should be no such thing as a "general ticket" in the process of popular election of public officials.

It is hardly necessary to do more than state this principle to establish it. Most men will agree, that, if a people is really to form a judgment, on the merits, as to any man or measure, it must consider that man or measure separately, by itself. A judgment by one vote on many men or measures is a judgment on none.

We come, then, to the principles which relate to

B. THE ORGANIZATION OF THE GOVERNMENT.

PRINCIPLE IV.—Each Man and Each Body of Men must have One Function.

The practical meaning of this principle is this—

1. Each people must have its own distinct government.

There must be a distinct government, a distinct

body of public servants, for each town, city, and state, for each body politic.

It is quite clear that local, and state, and national affairs should be administered by wholly distinct organizations of men.

2. Deliberative and administrative functions must be kept distinct.

If there be any fact that is established by human experience, it is that, in all human affairs, we must have, for administration, the will of one man; and for deliberation, for the decision of questions of general policy, for general supervision and control, we must have the wisdom of many men. The two duties demand essentially different men. The one calls for great vigor and energy, the personal power of commanding. The other demands calm thought — wisdom. Some exceptional individuals have the fitness for both duties. As a rule, however, the men who are pre-eminently fit for the one are not pre-eminently fit for the other. The men who are best for counsel are not always best for execution. The men who are best for execution are not always best for counsel.

But another reason is this: Unity of function is the natural law of the higher political organisms. This may sound like mere theorizing. It

is, in truth, the teaching of all scientific observation. Examine it in the light of experience. The working success of any large organization of men, as every man who has had any considerable experience in practical affairs is well aware, depends above all things on giving to each man his one work, and giving him time to learn that work, and to do it well. To have men continually shifting from one work to another makes it impossible that they should be thorough in either. The larger the affairs, and the larger the organization, the more essential is this point. In the affairs of a small town or village we can endure a certain amount of confusion and roughness of method, without any very disastrous results. The small town, among political organisms, is the plant of one organ. But take the affairs of a great people, of ten, or twenty, or fifty millions. Can any man do his work thoroughly, or well, who gives a few hours to naval affairs, a few hours to army affairs, and a few others to the post-office and other branches of administration? Especially, is it a possible thing that any man can take an active part in the deliberations of the most important popular assembly, which is to act on all the most important questions of public policy, and, in addition, be the efficient head of an administrative de-

partment? To state the question is, with every practical man of affairs, to answer it. No one man can have the capacity, or the knowledge, or the physical strength, or the time, for any such undertaking. That is the teaching of all human experience.

3. The popular assemblies for action on measures, or, to use the ordinary nomenclature, the legislatures, should not be the popular assemblies to take action on men; in other words, they should not act as electoral bodies in the process of popular election.

Especially is this so, if they have the power of removing administrative officials.

This is, however, a point on which many men will differ, and on which any lengthy consideration here would be fruitless.

PRINCIPLE V.—The Supreme Control of each People's Public Affairs must be in One Body.

In every body politic there must be some authority, some one man, or one body of men, or some combination of different men and bodies of men, whose judgment and will on all questions of general public policy shall be supreme. Else we have confusion and anarchy.

The one man system, autocracy, has been thor-

oughly tried, and found wanting. No one man can have the knowledge, or the strength, or the time, to decide wisely the great questions of general policy for any people. It needs the wisdom of many men. The supreme mind in any people must be many sided, it must be, as far as is possible, all sided; all interests must be represented, all shades of opinion must combine, to shape the general policy of any great people. There must be the co-operative thought of many minds. Only one way is possible to secure a wise general control of any people's public affairs. That is, to secure the widest possible representation of all interests and all men in the state, in a deliberative assembly. How that assembly is to be selected need not yet be stated. But if we are to have a wise policy, it is essential that we should have such an assembly.

But if we have such an assembly, shall its judgment be subject to revision or a veto, at the hands of a second assembly, or of the head of the executive administration, or of a committee or council?

Many wise men in times past have held the opinion that it was not safe to vest the supreme control of all questions of general public policy in any one body of men—that it was necessary in order to secure wise action that there should be a

second consideration of laws and public measures by a second deliberative body. Especially where one house, as it is called, of the legislature has been chosen for short terms of office, it has been deemed necessary that there should be a second house of some kind, holding office by a longer tenure, which should secure wiser action on ill-considered measures. It has also been by some men thought wise to give the head of the executive administration a veto, under some restrictions, on the action of the legislature, for the purpose of securing the executive against what is termed legislative encroachment or usurpation. In short, it has been the belief of a large school of political students that it was necessary, under a democratic or popular government, to have what is termed a system of checks and balances: the legislature, it has been thought, must have a voice in the appointments of the executive; the executive must have a voice in the work of the legislature; and the two together must control the judiciary. In other words, no one man or body of men should be trusted with the whole of one power, and held to one work; but power must be divided, and each man and body of men must do a little of everything. Men of this school of thought are generally in favor of boards and commissions for admin-

istration, on the idea that great power, in the hands of single men or single bodies of men, is a thing capable of abuse, and dangerous. In the same way they say the legislature must have two houses, and the executive must have a veto; because the administration cannot be safely trusted to one man, and the supreme control of public affairs cannot be safely trusted to one body of men.

The ideas of this school of thinkers are, as it seems to me, now well established to be unsound, by both reason and experience.

The true security for wise action on the part of the legislature, to use the ordinary term, must be found in the number of its members, their quality, and the necessity of agreement by a majority before they can take any action at all. If we can secure the selection of a body of men who shall fairly represent the greatest diversity of interests, who shall be able and honest, who shall have training and experience, who shall become a well-organized and efficient working body, and if we can also secure that this body of men shall be at all times responsible to the wisest public opinion, we shall have as thorough security as we can well get for a wise general policy. If we can get such a body of men, and can have such security for their wise action, most men would agree that it would

not be reasonable that the judgment of such a body should be open to reversal or question at the hands of any one man, or of any one class of men.

Or would it then be wise that we should have another body of men, representing equally diversified interests, men of equal capacity, honesty, and experience, with equally good organization, and under the same responsibilities, which should have a concurrent voice in deciding these questions of general public policy? I am unable to see how such a system would be wise. It might, indeed, sometimes be the case that a body of men such as has been described would make its mistakes. That is a possibility that we cannot avoid. But the evils of two houses with equal concurrent powers are greater than the benefits. The existence of two houses always creates jealousy and contest. It always makes necessary bargains and compromises. Duality of control is incompatible with vigor and efficiency. I agree that we must have the greatest possible security for the thorough and wise consideration of public questions. But we must get that security in the quality of the members of the popular assemblies. Those members must have the fullest opportunity to get training and experience. They must be put under the

most thorough responsibility to the people. But if the members of the popular assembly are the ablest men in the community, and are under such responsibility, then we must be content, for the time being, for better or for worse, to trust that body of men. The use of two organs to do the same work twice does not rest on sound principle. No doubt, in the gradual growth from the hereditary to the democratic system, and in the growth from federal to national systems, it is at times necessary, as a measure of temporary compromise, to use a combination of two legislative houses. But the progress of political development, here as elsewhere, is towards unity.

This question is, however, one on which thinking men still differ, the solution of which must, in any people, and at any time, be made by the lawful authorities.

PRINCIPLE VI.—Executive Administration must be under One Head.

This principle is one that has now become established, as to political as well as industrial organization. It is fundamental as to all organisms that are made up of human beings. To secure efficiency of administration, we must have the will of one man. To secure responsibility in administration, we must

have the responsibility of one man. The division of responsibility is its destruction. From the lowest administrative official to the highest, in order to secure efficiency and responsibility, we must have the one-man system.

We come then to the principles which relate to

C. The Selection of the Organs and Members of the Government.

Principle VII.—The Body having the Supreme Control of each People's Public Affairs must be that People.

That is, the legislature, the body of men which is to make the laws, raise the revenues, appropriate the money, and have the supreme control of each people's public affairs, must be that people itself; acting, as has already been stated, in its own public meeting; its citizens meeting in their own persons, if their numbers will allow, if not, then in the persons of their elected representatives.

This is the fundamental idea of democratic government. To the believers in democratic government it needs no argument.

In practice, its meaning is, that the supreme general control of the public affairs, whatever they

may be, of the small towns and other primary districts shall be directly in the hands of the popular assembly of citizens—meeting and acting in one body, in their own persons. In the case of larger peoples, as in the case of large towns, cities, and states, the supreme control of each people's public affairs, the making of its laws, the raising and spending of its public revenues, will be in the hands of one popular assembly of representatives, chosen by the primary assemblies of the citizens, or by electoral assemblies of representatives.

If the considerations thus far made be sound, the practical working of this principle would secure for each people the selection of a body of men for the supreme control of its public affairs, who would be, as a rule, the best men that could be selected. They would almost certainly be men of ability and integrity. Their common judgment, if they have time to gain experience, if they are kept under thorough responsibility, and if they are free, would be more certain than any other judgment, in the vast majority of instances, to be the wisest judgment that could be formed. It is no doubt conceivable, that a body of men might be selected by some intelligence higher than human, who would be wiser than the men selected on the principle here indicated. But so long as

we use in political organization merely human methods and human wisdom, I am unable to see any means whereby a body of men can be better selected to be the supreme body in the state.

This principle is essential in the framing of any government that can properly be called democratic. Even if we should concede that there was some sound, practicable method for selecting a wiser body of men for its purpose than the elected popular assembly (which I do not believe), yet any system of government wherein the supreme control of affairs is vested in any one man, or in any body of men other than the popular assembly, could not be called democratic. By no other system can we secure the free voice of each individual citizen, or the supremacy of the will of the people.

But in order that this popular assembly should do the work of which it is capable, the action of this assembly of men, after they are selected, must be free. Representatives must be free as well as the citizen.

How that result is to be obtained depends on points yet to be considered.

PRINCIPLE VIII.—The Head of Each People's Executive Administration must be Selected by that People.

Here, too, each people will act in its own popu-

lar assembly, of citizens or their elected representatives.

If the considerations heretofore advanced be sound, this principle will secure the best selection, as a rule, of the one man who is to be the head of each people's executive administration. The principle is simply the statement of the principle of popular election in its simplest natural form.

PRINCIPLE IX.—Subordinates in the Executive Administration must be Selected by their Head.

The chief executive of each people must have the sole power of selecting his heads of departments, or his immediate subordinates, whoever they may be. And throughout the executive administration of each people, every head of a department or office must have the selection of his own subordinates. For the wisdom of his selections he must be under thorough responsibility. But the selection must be his. And in his selection he must have absolute freedom.

This is a point well established by experience and common-sense. If any man is to accomplish results, he must select his own tools. In any office or department, public or private, no man other than the head of that office or department can know what men are needed in its different posi-

tions. He, too, is the only man who can select men who will work well under himself. Other men may possibly select better men for themselves. No one but himself can make good selections for him. He may not always make wise or honest selections. If he does not, time will show that fact in working results, and then the remedy will be to remove him. But so long as he is at the head of the office, he alone is the one man who can properly make the selection of the men under him.

This is made more clear when we consider the fact familiar to all men of experience in practical affairs, that the fitness of men for working places can be ascertained only by trying them at their special work in those places. Test them as carefully as we can beforehand, the test of actual work in the service is the only test that is decisive. That test can be made by no one but the head of the department or office. The fitness or unfitness of some men will be ascertained at the end of an hour or a day. With others it may take a month or a year. But there is only one man who can make the test or the selection fitly.

Justice to every head of a department or office requires, too, that he should have this power. We cannot justly hold any man responsible for results,

unless we give him the selection of his subordinates. And to insure the efficiency of public administration we must hold men responsible for special working results, and not for fidelity to great general principles.

Especially is it very pernicious to give to the legislature any voice in making or confirming executive appointments. It is certain to destroy executive responsibility. It is certain to destroy executive efficiency. It is impossible that members of the legislature should be able to form a wise judgment as to the fitness of executive officials, other than the one head of the whole executive administration. The work of the one man at the head, in its general results, they can see and judge. But the work of subordinates will necessarily be beyond the range of their vision. In the selection of subordinates the legislature should not be allowed a voice.

We come then to the principles relating to

D. The Securities of the Government.

In one sense the securities of the public service are to be found mainly in its provisions for the wise selection of those public servants who are at the head of each people's government. If the men

at the head of a public service, the body of men who control a people's general policy, and the one man who superintends its executive administration, are its best men, then the security which that people has for an honest, wise, and vigorous administration of its public affairs is as thorough as it can well be. If the men at the head of a people's government are the wisest and most honest men in the community, if they are only free to use their own best judgment—and if they are given time—they will be very certain to find and remedy existing evils, either in the form or the working of that people's political system.

Aside, however, from this point, in addition to the principles which relate to the organization of the state, and the selection of individuals for its different functions, there are certain other principles which may be especially said to relate to its securities, strictly so called, that is, to the constitutional provisions for securing the most healthy vigorous action of every organ and member in the body politic, and of the whole body.

In order to secure this healthy, vigorous action, it is clear that every man in the state, every individual citizen, and every public official, so far as concerns the exercise of his public functions, shall be at all times under the direct supervision and

control of some one man or body of men, the best fitted to that duty. In each body politic, in each town, city, state, and nation, every subordinate in the executive administration, each head of a department or office, each head of a people's whole executive administration, and each member of its popular assembly, must be at all times under the direct supervision and control of some one man or body of men, the best that can be found for that purpose, who shall be specially charged with that supervision, who shall punish or remove him, not after a trial in a criminal court, not at the end of a term of years, not merely for crimes and misconduct, but at any time, for any reason that may render his further continuance in the public service at that particular time inconsistent with the highest public interests. Public offices are not property, of which no man should be deprived but by due process of law. They are trusts, to be held and used only for the interests of the people, which should be taken away whenever required by the people's interests. The interests of the servant are not to be weighed for an instant in opposition to the interests of the people.

What securities then can we find for such supervision and control?

The principles relating to these securities, as

they seem now to be established by a long political experience, are the following:

PRINCIPLE X.—Each People must Control the Members of its own Public Meeting.

The meaning of this principle is, inasmuch as the people can take action, either as to measures or men, only in its popular assembly — that the control of the individual members of each popular assembly must be in that assembly itself; that is, the primary assembly of citizens shall have the power, for sufficient cause, on a sufficient vote, to punish, suspend, or remove any one of its members; so, too, each representative popular assembly, of a town, a city, a county, a state, or the whole nation, shall have the power (as most of them with us now have), for sufficient cause, on a sufficient vote, to punish, suspend, or remove any one of its members. It means, too, that this control of its own members, vested in each popular assembly of citizens or representatives, shall be the only control of those members; that each member of a popular assembly shall be responsible to his whole people, thinking and acting in its own public meeting, and not to any smaller part or portion of that people. It means especially that there is to be no such thing as tenure by election. No

member of a popular representative assembly is to be required, as a condition of remaining in that popular assembly, to carry a popular election in his special district, once in one year, or two years, or any number of years. But each member of each popular assembly is to continue in the service of his people, until that people, the whole of it, by its judgment, uttered in its popular assembly, shall decide that his removal is required by public interests. These removals by the judgment of the whole people must be the only removals. Elections would then be held only to fill vacancies, when vacancies should occur, by removal, resignation, or death. Instead of having all the members (or a large number of them) of all the popular assemblies in the land go out of office once in each year, or once in any fixed term of years, instead of having general elections of all or many representatives at fixed periods, single members would go out of office separately, and be elected separately. Instead of having periodical revolutions in the membership of the popular representative assemblies, there would be a steady and rapid change of single members, in an easy, natural manner, by easy, natural processes; a steady outgoing of old members, and a steady incoming of new ones, the new ones chosen by free popular vote. Death alone,

even if there were no removals or resignations, would, within a short time, make a complete change in the membership of every popular assembly in the land, except the primary assemblies of citizens. In these primary assemblies the change of membership would be comparatively slow; for men would become members when young, and would generally remain members until death. But in the representative assemblies the change in membership would be much faster. The men chosen to be the members of the representative assemblies would generally be, at the time of their election, well advanced in years. The higher the assembly, the larger would be the constituencies, and, as a rule, the greater the age of its members. In such a body as the Congress of the United States there would be a substantially complete change in the membership in about twelve or fifteen years. That change would come easily, naturally, and gradually. The process of popular election would be applied to its natural use, that of selecting men—not that of enforcing responsibility.

This principle will seem, to some minds, startling, at first sight. On full thought, it will, as I believe, commend itself to the judgments of most thinking men. It is, as I believe, essential to the

healthy growth, possibly even to the existence, of free democratic government.

Let us examine the considerations on which the principle rests:

1. It is essential in order to secure the free, healthy action of the individual citizen.

It is a belief very widely held by the friends of democratic institutions, that each member of every representative popular assembly should be required to submit himself at reasonably short intervals of time, for a re-election, to the whole body of individual citizens who elected him.

The theory on which this belief rests is that thereby each individual citizen has the opportunity, at fitting times, to pass judgment, in his own person, upon the conduct of his own representative; that thereby the individual citizen is given an opportunity to exercise a direct control over the administration of public affairs.

This belief and this theory are, I submit, mistaken. The experience of the people of the United States has now demonstrated that, in the case of any people of large numbers, any system of government under which general elections, for the members of the popular representative assemblies, are held at regular intervals of time, effectually deprives the individual citizen of his

rightful political power, and his political freedom.

This result has already been considered as one which is caused necessarily, under any system where the individual citizens are compelled to act separately on public questions, without the organ of the popular assembly; especially where election districts are large, and large numbers of citizens are therefore compelled to act separately, without being organized as a people, in the process of so-called popular election.

But the same result comes as necessarily and certainly from any system of general periodical elections. The magnitude, intricacy, and permanence of the work of carrying general elections, in any large people, with large numbers of voters, for the highest offices in the state, naturally and necessarily take that work out of the hands of the ordinary citizens, and put it into the hands of great organizations of professionals. The regularity and continuousness of the work make these organizations permanent and powerful. It becomes practically impossible for any man to be elected to any public office without a nomination at their hands. Sooner or later the time comes when the ordinary citizen finds his political functions limited to a mere choice between the candidates of these pow-

erful organizations. On the other hand, the worst elements in the community come to have an undue weight in public affairs. The men who furnish the time and money, and who gain the skill, required for the work of these permanent powerful organizations, are mainly men who work for money, and men who need to influence and control the action of public officials to serve their own personal ends. Rich men, who wish only justice and equal rights under the law, will not pay the cost of this election work. Poor men cannot pay it. The result is that the work is largely done and paid for by adventurers and criminals. The ordinary honest citizen finds himself unable to compete with these skilled professionals, and becomes comparatively powerless in public affairs.

If, on the other hand, we leave the control and removal of the members of the popular assemblies to the assemblies themselves, if we use the process of election only for the purpose of selection, to fill vacancies, when vacancies occur, then, whatever other result may or may not be accomplished, we shall at least greatly reduce the magnitude of this work of carrying elections; and the *tendency* at least will be to destroy the trade of the professional politician, and give the ordinary citizen freedom, and a fair field, in his political action. Especially

we shall take away the great prizes of election work. We shall decrease the enormous number of vacancies in the highest offices in the state. They will not come at fixed intervals of time. The magnitude of the work will be diminished, and its rewards will be made fewer and more uncertain. The profession will cease to pay. As far then as concerns our present point, the *tendency* will be to destroy the profession of election workers, and to put an end to the powerful organizations of professionals which exist merely to carry elections. I do not now say that this provision alone will completely destroy that profession, or those great organizations. I do say that such would be its *tendency*, and that without this provision, so long as any people continues to expose its highest offices, as the regular prizes, to be won at regular periods by carrying general elections through large election districts with great numbers of electors, so long this work of carrying elections will certainly fall out of the hands of ordinary citizens, and into the hands of great organizations of professionals. If, however, a people uses, in the selection of its highest public officers, the organ of the public meeting at all stages; if, too, vacancies are uncertain; if elections are held only to fill vacancies, when vacancies occur, at times which no

one can foresee, at least one step would be taken towards enabling honest and able citizens, with only a reasonable expenditure of time, to take part in the regular popular assemblies, primary and representative, on a fair footing, and to have their natural and legitimate influence in shaping popular deliberations and popular action. This would be at least one point towards securing for the ordinary citizen something that could be properly called freedom of political action.

2. It is essential in order to secure the free and healthy action of the people.

Frequent or regular general elections, for all the members of the representative popular assemblies, surely and necessarily become, in time, mere struggles for power between great factions of professional electioneering agents. The idea that such elections give a true declaration of the people's judgment on the administration of public affairs is a mistake. At such elections the people, as a people, has no real opportunity to deliberate. Individual citizens, even, cannot deliberate. Men join in a great political campaign. They fall into the ranks of one or another great election army. Their passions become inflamed. Their fears are aroused. The conditions are as unfavorable as they well can be to the getting a calm judgment,

even of individual citizens, as to men or measures. No doubt it is a possible thing for a very intelligent and law-abiding people, accustomed to democratic forms of procedure, to stand the strain to which the body politic is subjected by these great contests for political supremacy. But with a people just beginning the experiment of democratic government, these periodical convulsions are dangerous processes. If they really secured an expression of the popular judgment, and that judgment could be secured in no other way, it might be necessary to endure them. But the most that they give is a mere aggregation of individual preferences, uttered in times of great popular excitement, for one or another of different factions of professional politicians. They give nothing that can be correctly called a judgment of the people.

But this idea that the whole mass of individual citizens should have the opportunity, at frequent or infrequent intervals of time, to express their individual approval or disapproval of the administration of great public affairs, rests on a fundamentally erroneous theory of democratic government. Such a thing is neither practicable nor desirable. It is not practicable, for the reason that, as has already been shown, these frequent general elections bring into existence such powerful or-

ganizations of skilled professionals, that the mass of individual citizens become mere puppets. Elections fail to give even a collection of individual judgments. It is not a possible thing to devise any political system which will enable the whole body of citizens (except in the small primary districts) to have a direct voice in the administration of public affairs. As to all public affairs, other than the local affairs of the small towns and villages, the people must always act through representatives. The function of the individual citizen cannot go beyond the having a voice in the selection of those representatives. Nothing more than that is practicable. If the attempt is made to give to each individual citizen something in the nature of a direct voice on measures, by having the citizens often elect men, the attempt defeats itself. It is an unnatural political process. It necessarily and certainly increases the volume of election work to such a degree that elections cease to be expressions of the popular judgment, the people loses its political freedom, and what should be a democratic government becomes a mere election machine.

But if it were a possible thing to give to every individual a direct voice on measures, other than in the local affairs of the small primary districts, it

would not be desirable. I believe in the expediency of giving to the individual citizen the fullest part that he can possibly take, under any political system that can be devised, in the administration of public affairs. But the function of the individual citizen must be limited, as to all but local affairs, to his voice in the selection of men. As to measures other than local, the individual citizen never is, and never can be, able to act wisely. I do not here draw any distinction between rich men and poor men, between men learned and unlearned. I say that all individual citizens, rich and poor, learned and unlearned, alike, are incapable of forming a wise judgment on the great questions of state and national policy. The large public questions of large peoples, if they are to be decided wisely, must be decided by men carefully selected, who can take time to learn the special facts of special cases, who can confer with men of other views, who can take part in the common deliberations of men who represent diverse interests, and who can, after such conference and deliberation, take part in the forming and uttering of a calm, common judgment. The judgment of single individuals, however learned or skilled, on great public questions, has comparatively little value. That the individual citizen, however intelligent he may be, however able he

may be, shall be allowed to pass his individual judgment on great public questions to which he cannot give special study, on which he cannot deliberate with other men, is not in accordance with any sound theory of democratic government. Democratic government means, not that each individual citizen shall have a separate individual voice on every public measure in his own person, but that every citizen shall, either in his own person or in the person of his representative, have one voice in the people's public meeting, by which all questions of general public policy are decided. On mere local questions he can have this voice in his own person. On questions other than local he must have this voice always in the person of his representative, in whose selection he has had, with all other citizens, his equal part.

This whole matter of the attempt, under the form of periodical popular election, to give to the individual citizens the control of their general public policy, in the end, comes down to this: With or without periodical elections of the representatives in the popular assemblies, the actual decision of actual questions is, and necessarily must be, in the hands of representatives. The point then, is this: Is it possible, by a system of periodical elections, to secure, as to the representatives,

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the people? My answer is—no.
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sufficient cause, removable, whenever the whole people, by its judgment, uttered in its own public meeting, shall so decree.

Can we say as much as that for any system of periodical general elections?

3. This principle is essential in order to secure good government.

In order to secure good government, these popular assemblies, of the large cities, and states, and of the nation, must be efficient working organizations of efficient experienced men. I assume, and believe, that the process of popular election, used in its proper form, and for its proper uses, will give us the best men that can be selected as the members of those popular assemblies. But after these members have been selected, then they must have time, and opportunity, to get experience and training for their work. All their surroundings must be such as to make each assembly grow into a highly developed working organism, with all its members co-operating vigorously and harmoniously, as few human organizations have thus far done, with unity of personal interest, and unity of public purpose. On its popular assembly each people must depend for the wise conduct of its public affairs. The popular assembly must be the people's brain, made of its finest fibre, steadily

fed with its richest blood, continually renewing its single cells. The conditions must be such as to secure its most free, vigorous, healthy action, if the life and action of the whole state are to be vigorous and healthy. Especially, it will be necessary, in the body politic, that this brain should rule the trunk, and not the trunk rule the brain.

Let us examine these points with somewhat more of detail.

Government by the people does not mean government by the collected voices of all the individual citizens. It means government by the will of the people, and especially by the people's judgment. Wise measures cannot be framed by any process of periodical popular election, or by any public profession of faith in great political principles. Great questions of public policy must be handled by no average minds. Those men who think that democratic government is government by the masses, that its public policies are to be levelled *downwards* to the scale of ordinary intelligences, are greatly deluded. For the general supervision of the local affairs, whatever they may be, of the primary districts, the best body of men, taking all things into consideration, is, as I have said, the assembly of citizens. But when we come to the public affairs of larger peoples, of the peoples of

large cities, states, or of a great nation, then we have larger problems. For the handling of these larger problems we must have larger men. These men who are to supervise the affairs of large cities and states, and of the nation, must be not only men of large natural capacity, and large general experience, but they must get thorough knowledge for the duties of the bodies of which they are to be members. Especially they must get that training that comes only from long experience in their own line of public duty. The world has never yet seen the work that can be done in a great state by a popular assembly, of free men, freely selected by a free people, who have had time to get thorough training. The greatest single piece of political work of which I find any record—the framing of our National Constitution—was the work of comparatively untrained men, I mean, of men who were untrained for the special work they then had in hand. Who can imagine the results that would be accomplished by a body of men who should have the political teachings of the last hundred years from which to learn, who could train themselves for their work as men train themselves for private callings, and who could have time to become an efficient organized body?

But above all things, if any popular assembly is to be a thoroughly serviceable body of men, it is absolutely essential that its members should be free. They must be free to think and utter their own thoughts, and to agree on the best results of their own combined wisdom. The public measures of any wise and efficient government of any large people must be the best work of its wisest men. In private life reasonable men employ a carpenter, or a lawyer, or a physician, because they wish the use of his superior skill and knowledge. They wish him to use his own knowledge, and not theirs. In public affairs the people, when they once come to think of the matter, will wish the same thing. This American people has not yet begun to think, as to the true principles of democratic government. It has thus far accepted the political machinery of its forefathers without question. When it once comes to really consider the matter, it will wish its public affairs managed by wise men. It will wish those men to gain knowledge and experience, and to use that knowledge and experience in the people's service. By all means, let us give every citizen his one voice in the selection of the highest public servants. But when these servants are once selected, they must be free. The idea that the people's

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representatives must be kept at all times under the terrors of an impending re-election is a mistaken idea. It rests on the assumption that public servants chosen by the people cannot be trusted. That is a false assumption. I admit that there will be single instances, where single men, who have, to all outward appearances, long led honest lives, will prove to be dishonest. No doubt, too, honest men will at times yield to temptation, and at times do dishonest acts. But if any people that has freedom of thought and speech, with the habit of regular common public deliberation, is not able to select a body of representatives, the honesty and capacity of which, *taken as a whole*, can be safely trusted, then that people must, at least for a time, give up the experiment of democratic government. It must have a further teaching in the school of tyranny and distrust. All private affairs are conducted on the basis of confidence in men. Public affairs must be conducted on the same basis. Most men can be trusted to act honestly and efficiently, to the limits of their understanding and capacity, provided only they are free to follow their own best impulses. Free democratic government means freedom for public servants, as well as for their masters, the people. Government by slaves is fit only for slaves. It

never yet has been a success, and it never will be, for men who have achieved their freedom. I agree, and insist, that a people's servants, especially the highest, must be at all times under the most thorough responsibility to the people, that is, to the whole people. But if government is to be wise and efficient, public servants must have, with responsibility, freedom.

But there remains still another consideration. In order to secure the healthy life and growth of a people, as well as of any other organism, it is indispensable that that people should be free from great convulsions. Periodical revolutions, even though they be conducted strictly under the forms of law, with ballots for the weapons, make a healthy national life and growth an impossible thing. It is necessary, as I have said, that there should be some simple, easy, and speedy means for getting rid of *single* public officers, *singly*, whenever public interests require. But no society can long endure a political system where any large number of its higher public servants are compelled to engage in frequent or periodical struggles for political existence. Government by revolution is not a good government.

What, then, will be the actual working of a system of tenure by election, so far as concerns the

securing good government? We all well know the ordinary theory on this point. But what will be the actual working?

I submit that any system of tenure by election makes good government impossible.

Let us consider it.

In the first place, any system of tenure by election for the highest public servants bars the best men in the community from public life. The best men in any people are busy men. Generally, they are men who are making, or have made, their own fortunes. Often it is a matter of necessity with them to have the avails of their daily labor. They are certain, from one reason or another, to be closely engaged in private affairs. Such men cannot, in general, afford to give up their private employments for one, two, or ten years, and take the risk at the end of that time of losing their positions in public life, when very certainly their hold on their private callings will be shaken or gone. On the ordinary condition, that of keeping their positions so long as they do well their work, these men will be eager to enter the people's service. But no man who has not an independent fortune can afford to leave his business or profession, and give his time faithfully to the service of the people, for any considerable

period, and depend at the end of that period for his continuance in the public service on the chance of carrying a popular election. If he serves the people honestly, he will have slight chance of a second nomination at the hands of the men who will control nominations, unless he buys it, and pays for it, in money or its equivalent. Moreover, the best men, the men whom the people would select for high public trusts if the people were free, the men who are able, honest, and independent, cannot generally get nominations under any political system where the carrying of elections necessarily falls into the hands of professional politicians. The professionals will, in general, give the people as good appointments as they can. But even they are not free. They are compelled, by the necessities of political warfare, to use public offices to pay men who do the work of the great organizations. They require pliant men, men who will subordinate public to private interests. They have no use for men who cannot be made to serve their personal ends. Aside from all these considerations, however, election work, in the form which it ultimately takes under any system of tenure by election, is not work which able and respectable men are long willing to do. The soliciting of votes, the organizing processions

and public meetings, the procuring of nominations, the printing of ballots, the parade work of politics, is not work which they will consent to do. It is not work that is attractive to men who are able to earn an honest living in an honest calling. The work of the professional politicians is not clean work. Trading in public offices is not a dignified profession. Under a system of tenure by election it is no doubt the fact that men of means, ability, and honesty, often will for a time take a keen interest and an active part in election work. They will do so from the best motives. Sooner or later, however, they drop the work, or the work drops them, unless they are willing, either to do disreputable work themselves, or to pay other men for doing it. The practical result is that the best men in the community are barred from the highest places in the state. Those places are given to men who either do election work, or pay for it. In short, I venture to lay down a political axiom—tenure by election turns government into an election machine.

In the next place, any system of tenure by election for the members of the popular representative assemblies makes it impossible for those members to get training. To gain the knowledge and experience needed to be an efficient member of

the popular assembly of a large city, or a state, or a great nation, takes time—and freedom. At the end of one year or two years, a very able man, of large experience in private affairs, if he give his most earnest efforts to his public work, begins to learn the alphabet of political science. Who are these dreamers, who fancy that any man who has read a few books on political economy, or on the growth of parliamentary government, is fit to be a legislator for a great people? In the science of medicine, or the law, men toil all their lives to get the beginnings of professional knowledge. This science of politics—the largest of all human sciences—where is the man who can master it in ten years? It is a science yet to be discovered, by men of learning, after lives of labor. It needs time—all the time—of strong men. How is it a possible thing for men who are compelled to give their best energies to doing election work, or for men who hold their places for a term of one, or two, or ten years, to gain the training that is needed in the members of the great popular assemblies? Mere subordinates in administrative offices may no doubt be able to give us fairly good service after an experience of a few years. But the men at the head of public affairs, in whose hands must be the management of vast public interests, how is it

with them? They, of all men, must have time, and opportunity—and freedom—to study, think, and experiment, on the great questions of political science. It is an idea simply ridiculous, that any man, however great may be his natural capacity, however wide may be his previous experience in private affairs, can dispense with the training of a long experience in public life, if he is to do the people good public service. Take the ablest man in the country, with the widest range of knowledge, put him to-day in the United States Congress, he will be at first almost useless for his work in Congress. He must gain a thorough knowledge of public affairs. He must learn the working ways of other members, and of the body. At the end of one or two years he will only begin his apprenticeship. At the end of five years, if he has been able to give his time without interruption to his legitimate duties, he may have learned to be a valuable public servant. Some men will never become very useful members of a legislative body. But if a man is fitted to be such, every year (so long as he keeps his health and strength) makes him more valuable to the state. As far as this point is concerned, the system of term elections for the men at the head of the government is not a reasonable system. If it did really give

to the people a real control over public affairs, that would be one point in its favor. If it did really make representatives responsible to the people, that would be one point in its favor. It does not accomplish either of those results. It gives the control of public affairs to professional politicians. It gives the selection of these representatives to professional politicians. It makes these representatives responsible to professional politicians. It gradually and surely debases the quality of the highest public officials, and through them of the whole public service.

In the next place tenure by election for the members of the popular representative assemblies makes it impossible for those members to do their best work. A system of tenure by election for those members puts every single member of every popular representative assembly under the strongest pressure to be faithless to his public trusts. The tendency is to make all the highest public officials in the nation sacrifice public to personal interests. Every member is compelled to look out for his re-election. He is compelled to conciliate the rich and powerful interests that control nominations, and elections. The theory is that the necessity of carrying the next election compels the representative to serve the interests of the people,

of the greatest number. The practice is, that he serves the rich and strong, or, rather, only those of the rich and strong who are willing to spend money to influence public officials. To the people the representative gives a profession of faith in grand old principles—so grand that they have little to do with actual problems, so old that they are often out of date. But to the professional politicians, to the men who need to control and shape legislation to serve their own private ends, he gives solid work. I do not mean that this is done on any express corrupt agreement, or that it is done generally with any consciousness of wrong. The intentions of the men who do it are generally fairly good. But the men become blind to the true bearings of their acts. They are compelled to serve the interests that will secure to them renomination, and re-election. If this were the condition of only one member, or of only a few members, the evil would be comparatively slight. But consider what must be the practical working of affairs when the thousands of men who have the supreme control of all public affairs, of the making of all public laws, and the spending of all public moneys, are dependent, and are compelled, one and all of them, to be looking out for a re-election. The influences are all against simple, honest ser-

vice to the people. Every one of these men is engaged in a continued struggle for political existence. We might almost as well look for efficient public service from men adrift in mid-ocean fighting for a plank.

Moreover, the system of tenure by election for members of the representative popular assemblies makes it impossible for those members to be under thorough supervision and control. The idea that the mass of individual citizens can exercise intelligent supervision over any public officials other than local officials is a mistaken idea. The ordinary citizen cannot get the necessary knowledge. He cannot take the necessary time. But a still greater difficulty lies in the fact that, with short terms of office, and the consequent frequent changes in the membership of legislative bodies, it is impossible for any one, citizens or public officials, to get that thorough knowledge of public men that is necessary to judge them rightly. No doubt it is possible for a man, in one month, or one day, to show himself to be a great orator, or an accomplished parliamentary debater. But we are beginning to learn that in legislative assemblies, as elsewhere, the useful men are, in general, not the talkers. No doubt it is necessary that a representative in a legislative body should have

the power of clear, compact statement; and he should, as a rule, be a man who can speak, forcibly, and to the point. But the great popular orator is, in general, not a serviceable man in the deliberations of a well-organized body of well-trained men. Great orators, as a rule, use much time to small purpose. The serviceable men are the working men. The men needed in real working bodies, public as well as private, are not the great speech-makers. They must be men of thorough knowledge, of skill in affairs, who will work. Those men will in time become known. They must first become known by the men who work with them. They will not generally quickly gain a brilliant reputation with the people at large. In short, the only men in the whole community who will be able to form a wise judgment as to the usefulness of any member of a popular assembly will be his fellow-members.

But how is it on the question of freedom for the members of the popular assemblies? What will be the practical working of a system of tenure by election as far as concerns that point? I venture to lay down another political axiom. Tenure by election makes public servants the slaves of the election machine. And we all well know, that it is useless to hope for efficient work from slaves.

Last of all, it is impossible, with a system of term elections for the members of the representative popular assemblies, that any people should have a healthy political life. Let me take as an illustration the position of affairs at this time in these United States. The members of our national Congress and of our state legislatures alone, not including the members of representative popular boards and councils in counties, cities, towns, and villages, number nearly six thousand. Every general election becomes in effect a general revolution. In any large people, if all the members of all the legislative bodies hold office by the tenure of election, the necessary and certain result is that the political life of that people becomes a series of revolutions.

On the other hand, what would be the actual working results of a system where the members of each popular assembly were wholly under the control of the assemblies themselves?

In the first place, such a system would draw to the popular assemblies the best men in the community, and would enable them to gain experience and training for their public work. The people wish to have in their service their best men. Those men, too, wish to enter the people's service, provided they can enter it on honorable terms. If

they can be selected by the deliberate choice of the people, without working to get nominations; if the office seeks them instead of their seeking the office; if they can be given time, to fit themselves for good work, and to do it; if they can be free to do their best work; if their work can be done under the supervision and control of men who are able to rightly judge its value; if they can stay in the public service so long as they show themselves honest and efficient; if they can be well paid for their service, only moderately in money, but very liberally in reputation; if, too, they can have a reasonable certainty of rising in the service to the highest places in the people's gift, when they show themselves deserving — on those conditions the working men of society, the useful men, the men whom the people need and wish in their service, will be always eager to enter that service. If, now, the machinery of election be such as to make the action of the people free; if, too, the amount of election work be brought within a reasonable compass, so that the ordinary citizens and the people can control popular elections, then, whatever other results may or may not be accomplished, service in those assemblies will at least command able and honest men. So, too, it will then be a possible thing for the members of those assemblies to gain

training and experience, the same kind of training and experience that men gain in private callings.

So, too, it will then be possible to secure from the members of these assemblies their best work. Each member would be under the supervision and control of a body of men able to judge his work. He would be under the control of men more independent than any other body of men in the state, and more certain than any other body of men, to use wisely their power in controlling the members of their own body.

But the chief consideration is, that then the members of the popular representative assemblies would be free—to give to the people their best service.

But could men so placed, with no organized power immediately above them, other than the power vested in their own body, be trusted? Would not a body of men so placed become torpid and corrupt?

That is the question that will occur to nearly every mind, and the one that will at first bring to nearly every mind a doubt.

Let us consider it.

The whole matter comes, in the end, to this. Can the people, when they are free, be trusted to select the men who are to have the supreme, direct

control of public affairs, and can those men so selected be trusted with that control?

To my mind the answers to both these questions are free from doubt. We all know that there are men in every community who can be trusted to protect the interests of other men, placed by other men in their hands, at the sacrifice, if need be, of their own personal advantage. I, for one, have the fullest confidence that these men will be the men who will be selected for high public places by the people, when the choice of the people is a free, deliberate choice. I believe that these men will be true to themselves, and to their trusts.

But if that be not so, if we cannot trust the people to select their servants, and if we cannot trust the servants whom the people select, then we must give up the experiment of democratic government. Rotatory government, even under the form of popular election, has been thoroughly tried, and found wanting. The state must have stability. An election machine, even of two parts, is not an efficient organism for securing a wise and vigorous administration of public affairs. The men at the head of public affairs, after they are selected with the utmost care, by a natural process, must be trusted. That is a political necessity. If the people can be trusted to make the selection of

those men, let the selection be made by the people. If not, then let us go back to the system of selection by birth and inheritance. But the rotatory system, the system of revolution, will not serve our needs, even if the revolutionary methods of the present be somewhat of an advance on the revolutionary methods of the past. Evolution and not revolution, growth and not a series of political convulsions, are the political methods of the future. We must trust our public servants, and give them time—to grow. We must give the state time—to grow. We must trust men—and time. In these United States we have very thoroughly tried the system of distrust. We have assumed that men could not be trusted with power. We have made large numbers of public officials elective, and have given them short terms of office, on the idea that it was necessary to keep officials at all times in a state of apprehension as to a re-election, and that thereby we could keep public officials at all times under the control of the people. That system has failed. Our political experience shows that that system turns government into an election machine, and puts the administration of public affairs largely into the hands of political adventurers. Political systems, if they are to succeed, must harmonize with the facts of human nature. It is safe to trust

men—in public life, as we do in private life. The people can be trusted—to choose their servants wisely. The servants can be trusted—to serve the people truly.

But the chief consideration of all is that the abolition of tenure by election is necessary to secure the stability and healthy growth of the body politic.

It is essential in every well-ordered state that there shall be some supreme authority, that shall command the people's confidence and reverence. That supreme authority cannot safely be selected by the accidents of blood and inheritance. For the supreme control of the affairs of a great nation there must be a large assembly, of the nation's wisest men. It must be stable. It must be a body of men selected from the whole people, by the people, the embodiment of the people's wisdom, and of the people's majesty. The people must be in the habit of looking up to this body of men, selected by themselves, as the most august body of men in the state. We hear much said of the advantages, on the point of stability, of an hereditary king and an hereditary class. These things form, it is said, a conservative element in the state. I admit, and insist, that there must be a conservative element in the state. I maintain

that there must be an aristocracy, in every well-organized state. It is an absolute necessity. But I deny that it is possible to have a real aristocracy, if its members are to be selected by birth. A true aristocracy must be, not only a conservative element in a state, but its most progressive element. The men who are to make a real aristocracy must be the brain and conscience of the people. There is no practicable method of selecting those men other than the process of popular election, by universal suffrage—provided the process be in its normal form, and be used only for its normal use. The head of a free state must be something wiser than the head of one man. Monarchy is a system of government practicable only for rude warring races. The brain of a free, thinking people must be a highly developed organ, made of selected fibre. It must have time, to grow and develop. It must have a peaceful, harmonious growth. It will never thrive under a process of annual, or biennial, or decennial decapitation. To leave the language of analogy—it is, as I believe, necessary to have in every state just such a body as some men have fancied could be found in an hereditary nobility, It must be strong, stable, conservative, and progressive. No such body can be had except under a pure democratic government. The believers in hereditary

aristocracy have worshipped half a truth. The believers in democracy have worshipped truth mingled with error. A true democracy is a true aristocracy—a government by a body of the people's best men, selected by the people, growing into one healthy organ, the single cells of which from time to time perish and are renewed. Such a body, of selected men, men of all shades of opinion, representing all diverse interests in the state, accumulating stores of political wisdom, continually strengthened by streams of new blood, will command the confidence and reverence of the people—not for the reason that the public policy of such a body of men would of itself command the approval of a majority of the individual citizens, but because all citizens would know that the judgment of such a body of men was the people's own wisest judgment. Such men, so trained and so organized, would solve the new, great social problems that are presenting themselves from day to day. The public policy of such a body of men would be as wise as we can hope to secure by any human agencies.

This is what is now needed by any great civilized people. The public affairs of a great nation can no longer be administered on the principles of a political prize-fight. Some men seem to think that because politics in England and America for

the last hundred years has been a series of struggles for power between great factions, that that is the ultimate stage of political development. They seem to think that the proper way to administer public affairs is to place one faction in power for a time, until it ceases to command public confidence, and then to place in control some other faction, with different so-called political principles, until, in its turn, it ceases to command public confidence. Beating to windward served very well for the purposes of political navigation in the days of political sailing-vessels, and weaker political forces. Political forces have grown with the growth of other things. We now use political steam and electricity. We must find new political methods. Politics now demand trained men—and continuity of control. The body of men at the head of a nation's affairs must be a body of wise men, with broad training and large political experience, with the necessary provisions for bringing in, gradually, new single men to take the place of old men as they go out, and for selecting these new men by the most careful possible tests. But to have these men elected and re-elected every two years, or four years, or ten years, to keep the political atoms in a state of continued revolution—is to use in politics the methods of the kaleidoscope.

On the contrary, if we have a stable system; if we have a democratic system; if we have the people free from the tyranny of the election machine, men will be chosen on their merits, will first be selected for local offices, will there be tried, put to the competitive examination of actual service; they will be winnowed; they will have time to become known; those of them who show themselves fit for higher public trusts will be advanced to higher public places; and the men who are selected by a great people, to serve the whole people, in the people's highest council, will be men weighed in the balance and not found wanting. They will secure to the people a free, harmonious, healthy national growth.

We come, then, to the consideration of

PRINCIPLE XI.—Each People must Control the Head of its own Executive Administration.

This means that, in the government of the primary districts, the assembly of citizens will have the full and free power of punishing, suspending, or removing, the head of their executive administration. So, too, the popular assembly of every large town, city, county, state, and of the nation, will have the power to suspend, punish, or remove, at any time, for any reason in its judgment suffi-

cient, the head of its own executive administration.

The evils of the system of tenure by election for the chief administrative officer of a people are of the same nature as for the members of the representative popular assemblies. They hardly need a separate consideration.

In order to secure efficient executive administration it is necessary that the power to control and remove the administrative head, at any time when public interests demand it, should exist somewhere. The power should be full. It should not be restricted by any requirement of a trial. It should not be restricted to cases of high crimes and misdemeanors. It should be vested in the wisest hands.

How can it be in safer hands than in the supreme popular assembly? That body of men will be the body who will have the fullest knowledge of the daily work of the chief administrative head. That body will be more certain than any other to be free from disturbing influences, if it be itself free. The power which would be thus given to the popular assembly differs from the similar power that has in practice been long vested in the British House of Commons only in these respects. The British House of Commons has the power, by custom, to remove

the heads of all the chief administrative departments. It is here proposed to give to the popular assembly the power only of removing the one head of the whole executive administration. The British House of Commons has the power, according to custom, of also appointing the successors of the removed officials. Its members are therefore under the strongest temptation to intrigue against the heads of the administrative departments, for the reason that, whenever a combination can be made in the House of a sufficiently large number of discontented elements to make a majority, that majority can not only put out the men who are in office, but they can put themselves in the places thus made vacant. Under the system here proposed, except in the primary districts, the body which removed the head of the executive administration would not have the power of appointing his successor, but that successor would be chosen by a fresh popular election. The members of the removing body would therefore be as free as possible from any hope of gaining any immediate personal advantage from their own action. If the considerations thus far advanced be sound, the control of the administrative head could not be in wiser or safer hands.

PRINCIPLE XII.—Each Head of an Administrative Department or Office must Control his Own Subordinates.

This is a point well established by experience. It is gradually gaining general assent. No administrative official can justly be held responsible for results, unless he has the control, as well as the selection, of his subordinates. Nor can he otherwise accomplish results. No doubt the power will be open to abuse. But the remedy for the abuse of the power is to be found in punishing or removing the officer guilty of the abuse. The power must exist, if administration is to be efficient. No one can use the power wisely but the one man at the head of the office, who has under his eyes from day to day the work of the subordinates.

The different principles of democratic government, then, as it seems to me, are these:

Principles relating to

A. The Organ of the People's Will.

PRINCIPLE I.—The Public Meeting is the Organ of a People's Thought and Will.

PRINCIPLE II.—In the Public Meeting every Man must have One Voice.

PRINCIPLE III.—In the Public Meeting Action must be Taken on only One Man or One Measure at One Time.

B. The Organization of the Government.

PRINCIPLE IV.—Each Man and each Body of Men must have One Function.

PRINCIPLE V.—The Supreme Control of each People's Public Affairs must be in One Body.

PRINCIPLE VI.—Executive Administration must be under One Head.

C. The Selection of the Organs and Members of the Government.

PRINCIPLE VII.—The Body having the Supreme Control of each People's Public Affairs must be that People.

PRINCIPLE VIII.—The Head of each People's Executive Administration must be Selected by that People.

PRINCIPLE IX.—Subordinates in the Executive Administration must be Selected by their Head.

D. The Securities of the Government.

PRINCIPLE X.—Each People must Control the Members of its Own Popular Assembly.

PRINCIPLE XI.—Each People must Control the Head of its Own Executive Administration.

PRINCIPLE XII.—Each Head of an Administrative Department or Office must Control his Own Subordinates.

CHAPTER III.

WHEREIN OUR GOVERNMENT IS NOT DEMOCRATIC.

It has already been said that a government, in order to be really democratic, must be democratic in its actual working results, and not merely in some points of form.

Judging our present system of government by that standard, I think most men will, upon careful consideration, agree that our present government is not, in all respects, a democratic government.

The points wherein our government is not democratic, are, to my mind, the following:

I. It makes impossible the free healthy action of the individual citizen.

The want of any organ established by law, whereby all the individual citizens can combine in one body, for common thought and common action, is the first defect which fetters the action of the individual citizen. Throughout our entire political system the public meeting is almost wholly

unused in its free, natural form for the primary action of the citizens themselves. It is, as far as I am aware, in no state established by law as the regular organ, to enable the citizens to form and utter their common thought and common action on all subjects, to enable them to deliberate and act on all questions, both of measures and men. Especially, it is not regularly used in the process of popular election.

In default of any organ provided in and by the law, whereby all the citizens can combine in one body, to form and utter the common judgment of the whole people, citizens are compelled to organize factions, outside of the law, and to think and act with factions.

But the most serious point is the magnitude of the election work imposed on the people by our present form of government, and the intricacy of the processes of our so-called system of popular election. The magnitude of the election work already required under our present political system is something enormous. The Mayor of the city of New York is chosen by the direct vote of about two hundred thousand electors. The Governor of the State of New York is chosen by the direct vote of more than one million electors. The President of the United States is chosen, in

effect, by the direct vote of more than ten million electors. Moreover, the number of elective officers under our government is very great. At a general election in the State of New York at the present day each citizen may cast his vote for the following officials: Governor of the state, Judges of the Court of Appeals, Justices of the Supreme Court, Secretary of State, State Comptroller, State Treasurer, Attorney-General, State Engineer and Surveyor, district attorneys, county judges, state senators, members of assembly, sheriffs, county clerks, coroners, representatives to Congress, and in the year of a presidential election for thirty-five presidential electors. This is in addition to the large number of elective town and city officers. Elections of these officials are all for short terms of years. Many of them are elected each year. Few of them have a term longer than three years. The same condition of affairs exists in other states. Throughout the country there is an immense number of vacancies in public offices, occurring at short and certain intervals of time. The result is that incompetent men, men who fail at the ordinary callings of life, seeing this large supply of vacant public offices to be won by election work, and having on their hands large amounts of unused time, betake themselves to what is called "politics," which now

with us mainly consists of the work of manipulating nominating conventions, and trading in public offices. Political life is a continual struggle for office. The certainty that all the highest offices, local, state, and national, are put up as the prizes for election work at fixed periods, draws into this profession of so-called "politics" many very able men, who give their time and thought almost entirely, in one form and another, to this work of carrying elections. The large number of elective offices, the large size of election districts, and the frequency of the so-called popular elections, make it impossible for busy men to compete at this work with the professionals. The attempt has been often made. It has always failed. It always will fail, so long as our political system in its essential features remains what it now is. Every year there is a large number of nominating conventions, to make nominations for thousands of offices; millions of ballots are to be printed; these ballots must be in the hands of trusted agents at every voting place in every state. All this work requires thorough organization, skill, discipline, and large amounts of time and money. Very few of the leaders, or of the men who fill the ranks, of these great organizations have any intention of violating the law, or of doing any

moral or political wrong. Yet, in effect, unintentionally and unwittingly, these great election organizations constitute great standing armies that destroy the political liberties of the people. The members of these organizations are compelled, whether they wish it or not, to make nominations and carry elections, to serve personal ends. Fitness for public service is a fact that many of them would wish, were it in their power, to consider in making their appointments to public offices. But what can they do? The followers are in the hands of the leaders. The leaders are in the hands of the followers. They are slaves, as thoroughly as the mass of laymen citizens, to the necessities of continued political war. In fact, the practical result of the present political system in the United States, which at first sight seems in form so thoroughly democratic, has been to develop the most ingenious and remarkable tyranny known in all political history. The system is the more dangerous for the reason that in form it seems at first sight democratic. Thinking men well know that this form is delusive. The system is not democratic. The political life of the nation is a never-ending struggle for political power between rival factions—all of them brought into existence by the same cause, obeying the same laws, using the same methods,

compelled, whether they wish it or not, to prostitute the power of public office to personal ends. The result is a new kind of tyranny—the tyranny of the election machine. Under this system political freedom for the citizen cannot exist.

II. It makes impossible the free, healthy action of the people.

Under a really democratic government the judgment of the people must control its will, and the will of the people must be the law of its existence.

Under our present system of government the supreme control of public affairs falls into the hands of the men who are for the time the leaders of a dominant faction. What we call popular elections become merely contests between great standing armies. Freedom of popular action, in any proper sense of the words, does not exist. No doubt the citizens can make their own choice as to which of these armies they shall join. But that is not democratic government. The people does not think. It does not form its own judgment.

III. It makes good government impossible.

The system of organization is essentially unsound. Functions are confused. The same officials have legislative and administrative functions.

The appointment of administrative officials is put in the hands of legislative bodies. Administrative functions are vested in boards and legislatures.

The selection of public officials is made by wrong processes. Especially the men at the head of public affairs are, in effect, selected for their capacity to do election work. In the middle ages the men who had the control of public affairs were selected by the tests of war. Under our present political system the men at the head of public affairs are still selected by the tests of war—war by election and the ballot-box. The process of selection of our highest public officials is an unnatural process. It rests on unsound political principles. It selects men by false tests. It brings into existence an oligarchy of election workers instead of an aristocracy selected by the natural process of free popular election.

But the greatest defect in the system is its want of proper securities. It is impossible to enforce thorough official responsibility. In form we have responsibility to the people. In fact we have responsibility to the election machine. That is not a proper or sufficient responsibility for the needs of a great people. Under our present system of government the men at the head of our public service, the members of our popular assemblies,

our Presidents, our Members of Congress, our Governors, our Members of State legislatures, the Mayors of our cities, the members of our city and town legislative bodies, are responsible only to the election machine. They are its slaves. On it they all alike depend for the continuance of their political existence.

I venture to doubt, whether, so long as this system of slavery exists, so long as the individual citizens, and the people, and our highest public officials continue in this state of slavery, we shall successfully solve any great political problems. And if this be democratic government, I, for one, doubt if it is any longer equal to the political needs of a great people.

CHAPTER IV.

THE FORM OF A DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT.

The form of a Democratic Government framed on the principles here stated would be very simple.

Each people, the people of every village, town, city, county, state, and of the whole nation, would have its distinct political organization.

The small village or town would have its chief administrative official, under any name, who would have the appointment, removal, and control of all his subordinates, the superintendence of, and the responsibility for, all affairs of administration. He would be elected, in the public meeting of citizens, by the whole body of citizens. He would be removable by vote of that same body, whenever in the judgment of that body his removal was necessary. The popular assembly of citizens would make all necessary laws and regulations for the public affairs of that small people, and would raise and appropriate its own public moneys. The whole machinery would be as simple as it well could be.

This simplest form of municipal government

would be practicable only for populations of not above twenty-five hundred or thereabouts, giving a number of voters of not more than about five hundred.

In the larger towns and in the cities the organization would be still simple. Take the case of a city with a population of a million. That would give about two hundred thousand voters, or four hundred primary districts of five hundred voters each. Allotting one representative in the popular assembly of the whole city to each of these primary districts, we should have a popular assembly of five hundred members. That would give probably on an average about thirty new members each year. This assembly would have the supreme control of the public affairs of the city, and the control and removal of the head of its executive administration. This head of the executive administration would have the selection and control of his subordinate heads of departments. He would be chosen, whenever the office was vacant, by a representative electoral assembly, composed of members chosen by the primary districts.

In the case of a still larger people—such as the people of a single state, or of our United States, the differences between a government framed on the principles here developed and our present form of national government would be these:

1. Its supreme popular assembly would be composed of one body instead of two.

2. Each member of that popular assembly would be elected by an electoral body, composed of representatives elected by the primary districts, instead of being elected by a direct vote of citizens through one large election district.

3. That popular assembly would have the control and removal of the head of the executive administration, but would have no voice in administrative appointments or removals.

4. The head of the executive administration would be chosen by a representative electoral college, the members of which would be chosen in the same way as the members of the popular assembly, who would, in the act of election, meet, deliberate, and act, as one body.

5. The executive head would have no legislative functions.

6. The executive head would have the superintendence of all administration, and the full power of selecting and removing his subordinates.

7. Heads of administrative departments and offices throughout the executive administration would have full power to select and remove their own subordinates.

8. There would be no tenure by election.

As to all the governments, local and national, the principal changes from our present form of government would be these:

1. The introduction of the public meeting, as the organ for all popular action, as to men as well as measures.

2. The abolition of the system of tenure by election, and the substitution therefor of the system of tenure by the will of the people.

3. The separation of legislative and administrative functions.

These changes would, no doubt, be fundamental. They are certainly simple.

CHAPTER V.

THE WORKING OF A DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT.

NECESSARILY the working of what I consider would be a democratic government has been to a great extent considered in the preceding discussion of principles. What is said in this chapter will necessarily be largely in the nature of a summary and regrouping of points that have been before made.

To a certain extent, too, what is here said as to the working of a government framed on the principles already stated will be matter of speculation. But it will be not wholly such. There is no principle here stated that has not already been fully tested, and established by experience. The popular assembly is as old as the oldest historical records. It is the only known, and as far as I can see, the only possible, means whereby men of different ways of thinking can form a common judgment. So long as human nature is constituted as it now is, to accomplish that result easily and quickly, it is necessary for men to meet and confer, openly and harmoniously. Then they can agree.

It is also well established—by experience—that the popular assembly is an organ fitted only for outlining general policies; and that, for execution, for administration, the one-man system is the only one that has ever, thus far, succeeded. And, as far as we can see, this one-man system, for administration, is the only one that ever will succeed, so long as human nature continues to be constituted as it now is. It is also well established—by experience—that in the more complex and highly developed political organisms, there must be unity of organization; the organizations for the affairs of different political bodies must be distinct; there must be a distinct organization for local affairs of the smallest bodies, others for the larger bodies, and still another for the nation. It is also established—by experience—that, though carefully selected men, if they are free, can in general be trusted to do their duty, yet all men need the protection and assistance of thorough and constant supervision, at the hands of competent men, specially selected, of special fitness; that it is therefore necessary to have a much more thorough supervision for public servants than the supervision of the mass of citizens, whose time and thought are occupied with their own private affairs; that therefore the supervision and control of the mem-

bers of the popular assemblies and of the head of the executive administration must be vested in the popular assemblies themselves; and the supervision and control of administrative officers must be vested in their immediate superiors. It is also well established—by experience—that for the selection of the men at the head of governments, on whom the working success of every political system must always depend, no process is so safe, in the large majority of cases, as the process of popular election, provided it is used in its natural form, and is put to its natural use.

These principles are none of them new. They are all simple. As I believe, they are all sound.

What I am here attempting is the application of these principles. Thus far, we, the people of the United States, have been too closely pressed with other affairs to think carefully on political questions. We have been clearing a wilderness, uncovering the riches of a new continent, opening the great highways of commerce and civilization. We have used nearly half a century, in a somewhat costly, tumultuous, old-world fashion, in remodelling our domestic institutions. We are now beginning to give time and thought to our great problem, the development of democratic government.

To consider the probable working, so far as we can forecast it, of a political system framed on the principles here developed—that is the next step in this political study.

As nearly as I am able to discern, the probable working results of such a system would be as follows:

1. Such a system would tend to secure a free, healthy political life for the individual citizen.

First, and foremost, it would tend to give to the citizen political freedom. It would tend to destroy the great organizations of men who make the carrying of elections their profession. The amount of election work would be reduced to the minimum. The only elective offices would be those of the chief administrative heads of the different bodies politic, and the representatives to the different popular assemblies. Elections for those highest public offices, instead of being held at frequent fixed intervals, would come only when there were vacancies. The time of any such vacancies would be uncertain. At any one meeting of citizens in the primary popular assemblies it would seldom be the case that citizens would have to do more in the way of election work than elect one or two delegates to popular electoral assemblies. The process of election would be extremely simple.

All the citizens would meet. Up to the last moment any man could nominate a candidate. Any man could discuss the fitness of candidates. After nominations had been made, and discussion had, the citizens would make their selection, from nominations made on the spot and at the time, of public officials and delegates. Every man would have his one free voice, not only in selecting from nominations already made, but in making new nominations. The carrying of an election would be a matter at which ordinary citizens could accomplish some substantial result, by giving to it a reasonable amount of time, by simple, natural methods which all men understand, by attending the public meeting of citizens established by the law, where both the work of nomination and election would be done at the same time, and by the same body of men, the assembly of citizens themselves. The process used by the delegates who were chosen by the primary meetings would be the same. It would be the old, simple, rudimentary process of the town meeting. Can we devise anything simpler, or anything better?

Moreover, with the abolition of the term system, the certainty of large numbers of periodical contemporaneous vacancies vanishes. The great prizes of politics are made distant and uncertain.

With the amount of election work so reduced, with the process of election made so simple, and the rewards of election work made so distant and uncertain, the *tendency* would be to destroy the profession of men who live by manipulating nominating conventions. The ordinary citizen would have something that could be properly called political freedom. Every citizen would have the opportunity to think, nominate, discuss, hear discussion, and vote, in his own person, on every local measure, on the election of every local officer, and on the selection of every delegate who was to take action on state and national measures and men. That would give the citizen at least a much fuller and freer scope of political action than he has under our present form of government, or than he can have under any political system where the popular assembly of citizens is not used, and where, for lack of a scheme of organization provided by the law for voicing the action of the whole people, citizens are compelled, outside of the law, in order to get concerted action, to take refuge in the organization of factions.

Under such a system, too, the *tendency* would be to secure to each citizen, as far as constitutional provisions can secure it, his full weight in public affairs. The whole scheme now under considera-

tion provides not only for the use of the public meeting as the regular organ for popular action, but for the restriction of the process of election to the mere work of selecting men—and the consequent decrease in the mass of election work. The political work put upon the individual citizen would thus be brought within reasonable and natural bounds. Citizens would be compelled to attend primary meetings in order to regulate taxation, and protect their own property. They would find it possible to accomplish some practical result by fulfilling their ordinary civil functions. They would in time learn that political advancement would generally begin with careful and efficient discharge of local public service. Men of property and intelligence would be led to take part in the deliberations of the primary assemblies. The primary assembly would be the primary school for political education, where the young men could make their first political efforts and their first political blunders—where they could be judiciously suppressed for a time, until they should show decided capacity for public work. These primary assemblies would give the citizens a knowledge of their fellows, and in the end would enable them to form a just estimate of men's political characters. Is it possible to suggest a po-

litical machinery more certain to give to every man—in time—his full weight in public affairs?

It would, too, tend to secure from every man his wisest political action. I well understand that no political system can be framed that will work impossibilities. But all men to some extent can be educated. Can any system be suggested which will, more certainly than this, tend to secure the most thorough political education of the individual citizen? In the United States, the old town meeting has largely fallen into disuse, even in the parts of the country where it was once the regular organ for popular action. Outside of the large towns and cities it is still in some parts of the country used to some extent. But the necessity of voting with the great factions, under which citizens now are, gets men into the habit of largely governing their action even on local questions by mere factious considerations. The town meeting as an organ of free public thought has in a great measure fallen into disuse, even in districts where it is still held. But if the primary meeting were used as the organ for all popular action, we should have, in the large majority of cases, after men came to know one another, as great certainty as is practicable that the large majority of citizens would be influenced in their political action by

the men who would naturally and rightly be the popular leaders, by the men of sound political sense, and honest public aims. Whether or not, in the end, the action of any citizen would or would not be always the wisest action, the *influences* of the system at least would be such as would *tend* to secure from each citizen the wisest action of which that citizen was capable.

In short, this system, whereby we should secure co-operative politics for the individual citizens, whereby the work of the citizen would be brought within reasonable bounds, would at least have a *tendency* to secure, as to each individual citizen, his one voice, his full weight, and his wisest action, on every public question, whether of measures or men.

2. Such a system would tend to secure the free, healthy action of each people.

If the argument thus far be sound, if this system would tend to secure the free, healthy action of the individual, it follows, almost as a matter of course, that the system would tend to secure the free, healthy action of each people. Each people would have its separate popular assembly. Each popular assembly above the primary assemblies would be an assembly of selected men. The men would be more able than the average of the indi-

vidual citizens. They would be more honest. They would represent a wide variety of interests and thought. Their matured action, after free, common deliberation, could hardly fail to be of an order much above anything that would be accomplished by ordinary men. The probability would be that their action would be, in the large majority of instances, the wisest that the particular people whom they represented could compass.

3. Such a system would tend to secure good government.

The question here to be considered is what would be the probable operation of the system here examined, in the three essential points of a good government, that is, as to the organization of the government, the selection of individuals for its different functions, and its securities.

The point of organization has been already considered as fully as it can be within the limits of this book. Unity of function, for each man and each body of men throughout the whole body politic, is the main principle on which it rests.

As to the selection of individuals for the different functions in the state, the main feature of the whole system, and the one in which, if the scheme of organization be sound, the strength of the system lies, is the security that we should have for

getting good men at the head of the public service. As has been said more than once, the selection of subordinates in the administrative departments can be safely left, and must be left, in the hands of the men at the head of those administrative departments. The point of importance is the selection of the members of the popular assemblies, and of the men at the head of the executive administration. Those men who believe in democratic government at all must believe that the people, when it has the organ for free thought and free action, can safely be trusted with the selection of the men who are to be placed at the head of public affairs. Under this system, the selection of the head of each people's executive administration, and the selection of the representatives in each popular assembly, is in the hands of the people. And as to this point of the selection of individuals for the public service, the soundness of the system rests on the position that the judgment of the people, freely formed and uttered, through its natural organ, by natural methods, is the safest means for selecting the men who are to be at the head of each people's government.

As to the securities of the government, the system rests on these positions: that for the thorough supervision and control of public servants, there

must be, somewhere in the body politic, as to each public servant, some one man, or organized body of men, who shall be specially charged with that supervision and control; that as to subordinates in administrative departments, the only man who can properly exercise that supervision and control is the subordinate's superior; that as to the head of each people's executive administration, the only body of men that can safely or wisely exercise that supervision and control is the popular assembly; and that as to members of the popular assemblies, their supervision and control must also be left in the assemblies themselves.

I believe that these methods are nature's methods; and that they are the only ones that can be safely used by any people that has reached that point of development where it demands the control of its own affairs. As to peoples that have not yet reached that point of growth, the consideration of this problem has for the present only a speculative interest. It is not with them yet a question of practical politics.

To sum up, then, this branch of our study, the system here outlined would tend to secure, to each individual citizen, his one free voice, his full weight, and his wisest action on every public question. It would tend to secure the most free,

healthy, and wise action of each people. It would tend to secure good government. It would tend to secure a harmonious, healthy life of the whole body politic, and of its every organ and member. Such a system would, if the considerations here made are sound, justly deserve the name of a Democratic Government.

Whether or not these views are sound, that is the question to be submitted to the test of public discussion. What is here said is merely the expression of the ideas of a single individual, submitted for public consideration, to be winnowed, remoulded. This American people is just beginning to think on these things. They will now soon evolve a sound political system — the government of the future.

CHAPTER VI.

HOW TO MAKE OUR GOVERNMENT DEMOCRATIC.

LET the whole people again meet in its national convention, think, and act, on its own wisest judgment.

Emancipation, of the citizen, of the people, of our public servants, of the whole body politic, is the chief and first result to be accomplished.

If I am right in my conclusions thus far, it is necessary that we should have a thorough and comprehensive reorganization of our whole political system, of our town and city governments, of our state governments, and of the national government. If the principles here set forth are sound, it is necessary that we should give greater unity to our different systems of administration. We must separate local affairs from state and national affairs. Each people must have its distinct political organization. The functions of administration and of general control must be separated. The general control of the affairs of each people, for

better or worse, must be put in the hands of that people itself.

But where are we to begin? And what is the practical method by which the reorganization is to be accomplished?

To these questions I answer—the work of reorganization must begin with the reorganization of the national government. And the method of accomplishing it will be the method established by the National Constitution itself—the natural method, the people's method, the method by which the Constitution itself was framed, the National Convention of the people of the United States, meeting in the persons of its chosen representatives. This is the only practicable method whereby we can begin any substantial improvement in the administration of our public affairs, local, state, or national. Frequent attempts to bring about improvements in the administration of local affairs have thus far failed to accomplish any considerable or lasting results, for the reason that the great political organizations, all of them, are compelled, by the law of their existence, to use public offices for their private ends, and any substantial improvement in even the administration of mere local affairs will continue to be impossible, until we can frame and carry out some scheme of na-

tional reorganization that will destroy these great political organizations, *as they now exist.* That result cannot, in my judgment, be accomplished without first having a thorough reorganization of our national government. I do not say that the scheme of reorganization to be adopted must or will be the one here discussed. On the contrary, the chief function of the National Convention will be to consider and decide the scheme of reorganization. No one man can pretend to say what scheme will be the wisest. The wisest scheme in the end may not turn out to be possible of complete immediate accomplishment. But my belief is that a National Convention will, as did the Convention of 1787, evolve a wise and comprehensive system, and that the scheme that the convention shall adopt, will be very certain of the fate that met the scheme of 1787, adoption by the state legislatures or conventions. Consider the changed conditions. That Convention of 1787 was, in effect, only a convention of the individual men who were its members. It had the assistance of no outside thought. Its deliberations were ended, and its own work was accomplished, almost before the fact of its meeting was known to any large portion of the outside world. But a National Constitutional Convention of the people of the United States, held at this day,

will be, in effect, a convention of all the wisest political thinkers on the face of the earth. Its deliberations will each morning be reported to nearly every intelligent man throughout the whole thinking world. Its thought will be thoroughly discussed in the public press of every free people. Democrats, in every lettered country, will think with that convention, and will utter their thought. It will hear and heed their voices. No body of men has ever yet met under conditions that could at all compare with the conditions which will surround that convention. It will be certain to have in its membership many very able men. Most of them will be men who have, to some extent, made politics a profession. There will be a few members who may be called laymen. But the mere membership of that convention will be comparatively unimportant. It will be, in effect, the convention of the democracy of the world. Its chief function will be to voice the thought of that democracy. Its first result will be to decide what shall be the next step in the development of democratic government in these United States. That step, decided by that convention, will be taken. It will be the greatest step yet taken in the development of the government of great nations.

Still it may be fairly asked of any one who goes so far as to say that a large measure of change in our political system is needed, and who undertakes to develop a series of political principles that will to some minds seem startling, that he should show definitely how the transformation from our present system to a system framed on those principles could be effected without a revolution. The American mind is now very averse to revolutions. It submits to great evils in politics from its fear of the results of any great political change.

I shall therefore now submit, for public discussion only, a plan of reorganization which has at least this one advantage: it is, though thorough and sweeping, not revolutionary; it is, in fact, a plan for ending at once the series of periodical revolutions under the pressure of which we now endure political existence.

The plan is this—to begin the new system of national government with the men now in office—in other words, to try a new kind of reform; to make a change of system, instead of a change of men. To go somewhat more into detail, I propose that the amendments to the National Constitution should have these main features:

1. The continuance in office, until removed, of

the present national officials, the members of the Senate and House of Representatives, the President, and all other officials of the national government.

2. The abolition of the system of term elections for members of Congress, and the President.

3. The adoption, for the filling of vacancies hereafter occurring in Congress and in the office of President, of a system of popular election, wherein the popular assembly, of citizens and their representatives, at every stage, shall be the fundamental feature.

4. The conversion of the present Senate and House of Representatives into one supreme legislative body.

5. The giving to that body the control and removal of its own members, and the control and removal of the President.

6. The giving to the President the sole power of appointment, control, and removal of his own heads of departments.

7. The giving to each head of a department or office throughout the executive administration the appointment, control, and removal of his own subordinates.

This plan will, no doubt, be considered by many

men as sweeping and dangerous. It may not commend itself, on full consideration, to the public judgment. It may not be the one adopted by the National Convention.

It has, at least, these advantages:

1. It would command the support of all the men now holding office under the national government.

In other words, it would command the support, from motives of mere direct personal advantage, of the most powerful men in both the two present great political organizations. For, in its beginning, it is a plan to continue the powerful leaders of these organizations, and many of their followers, in their present positions under the national government.

2. It would best promote the highest public interests.

It would enable these men now in office to give their time and thought undisturbedly to public affairs. Upon the whole, though these men have not all been selected on sound tests, or by strictly democratic methods, they are the best body of men with whom it is now practicable to begin a new system of government. They have a larger experience in public affairs than any body of men we can now select. They are a better body of men than we have

any reasonable hope of getting under the continuance of our present elective system, which is working a steady deterioration of political men and political methods. It is only justice to these men now in office that they should have the opportunity to show their fitness for the places they now hold. They have, for the time, under our authority, been taken from other callings, and to a certain extent disabled from following other occupations. In time, and not in any very long time, the operation of natural forces would weed out the useless men, and bring in better ones. In time, the public service would purify itself. In time, and as time should show the need of it, new public men, but especially new public methods, would supplant those now in existence.

3. It would be simple and easy.

The adoption of a new system, in this way, would be without shock, and without violent opposition from existing vested interests and existing powers. It would be as easy as switching a railway train from a side track to the main line. Everything would move smoothly. There would be no immediate change of men. But a very great change, in both men and methods, would come, through natural causes, in easy, natural ways—in time.

4. It would be the first step in the process of emancipation.

It would begin with the emancipation of the men at the head of the national body politic; or, with the men who should, under a proper political system, form the people's brain. We should begin with establishing for the people of the United States freedom of thought. Freedom of popular action would come later. All this vast army of election workers would be taken out of the profession of carrying elections. The people would then begin to breathe freely, think freely, and act freely, on the matter of reorganizing the governments of the states. When that was accomplished, and state officials were taken out of the electioneering profession, out of politics, as the phrase is, then the peoples of the cities and towns would be free to reorganize their local government.

In time, the whole work of political reorganization would be accomplished.

These are the reasons that I submit for public consideration in favor of the calling a National Constitutional Convention, as the first step in working out the reorganization of our present political system, the bringing about the next stage in the growth of Democratic Government. The work is

a great work. It can be done only by organizing the whole people in one body, established by law, with full power to think, and to act, and to put its action in such form that it can be made the organic law of the nation, the authoritative expression of the wisdom and will of the people.

CONCLUSION.

The one point on which I here insist is that it is now time for the people of the United States to meet in its National Convention, to deal with the problem of national organization. More perfect organization, the enlarging the power of the people and of the individual citizen, the enlarging the securities for wise and efficient government, these are the questions with which this people has to deal. It is the time for action. What action the people will take, or had best take, when its convention shall be held, no one man can say. But it is necessary to take action of some kind. These questions are too large, and too weighty, for us to avoid them, or waste time in fruitless discussion. The people must act. There is only one machinery existing under the law by which action can be taken. That machinery is the machinery of the National Convention, provided by the Constitution itself.

This American people needs now to make a thorough study of its system of government. It

must examine the defects of that system, in the light of the experience of the last one hundred years. It must devise the remedies for those defects. These remedies must be devised on a careful study of actual working results. The American people is not fond of political patchwork. It makes governments and constitutions on broad comprehensive principles, by broad methods, not on the ideas of any one man or class of men, but on the judgment of the whole people. Free public conference, of the whole people, in a popular convention, is the method that this people has always used whenever it has had a great work to do.

Paper constitutions, framed in popular conventions, have been the means that this people has used to accomplish constitutional changes at each successive stage of its growth. It began making paper constitutions with the first day of its existence, almost before its existence began. Less than three hundred years ago, when we were about to begin laying the foundations of democratic government on this new continent, we gave to mankind the first example of the formation of a written Constitution for a body politic by the natural process of the free, formal, written assent of the individuals who composed the body. It is

well to recall the words of the instrument signed on board the Mayflower on the 11th day of November, 1620. It reads: "We whose names are under-"written, the loyal subjects of our dread sovereign "lord, King James, by the grace of God, of Great "Britain, France, and Ireland King, Defender of "the Faith, etc., having undertaken, for the glory "of God, and advancement of the Christian faith, "and honor of our king and country, a voyage to "plant the first colony in the northern parts of "Virginia, do by these presents, solemnly and "mutually, in the presence of God and one of "another, *covenant and combine ourselves together* "*into a civil body politic*, for our better ordering "and preservation, and furtherance of the ends "aforesaid; and by virtue hereof, to enact, con-"stitute, and frame such *just and equal laws*, "ordinances, acts, *constitutions*, and offices, from "time to time, as shall be thought most *meet and* "*convenient for the general good* of the colony; "*unto which we promise all due submission and* "*obedience*. In witness whereof we have here-"under subscribed our names, at Cape Cod, the "11th day of November, in the year of the reign "of our sovereign lord, King James, of England, "France, and Ireland the eighteenth, and of Scot-"land the fifty-fourth, Anno Domini, 1620."

From that time the American people has been using the popular convention, as its own peculiar method of working out its own development. In every state, a constitution has been framed by a popular convention. When the colonies first felt the need of common political action for the protection of common public interests, they called a convention. The Declaration of Independence was the work of a popular convention. The Articles of Confederation were the work of a popular convention. The National Constitution was the work of a popular convention.

It is the machinery for us to use now. This American people is now facing a new and great problem in the development of democratic institutions. What was intended to be a free democratic government has grown to be a tyranny—a tyranny of a new kind—a tyranny, not of men, but of a system. Our rulers have no wish or purpose to enslave the people. They would, if it were in their power, serve the people faithfully, to the best of their abilities. But no man in this country now has anything that deserves the name of full political freedom. The magnitude of the election work made necessary by our present system of government, with the lack of the natural organ for the thought and action of the people, has

brought into existence great and powerful organizations, which so fetter the action of the citizen, of the people, and of all our public servants, that an honest, efficient administration of public affairs is an impossible thing. The whole body politic is in chains. Citizens can do nothing but cast a ballot prepared for them by some great and powerful election organization. The people cannot freely form and utter its own judgment or will, on either men or measures. Public servants are compelled to use their public powers to serve the personal ends of the great election organizations. Those organizations control nominations, and thereby substantially appoint and largely control all of our highest public servants. The men who hold the highest public places, on whom we must necessarily depend for the efficient administration of all public affairs, are not free men. They are engaged in a perpetual struggle for political existence, and, to a greater or less extent, serve the powers on whom they depend for a continuance of their political lives. So long as our present system of government continues, we can expect no permanent improvement in the administration of our public affairs.

The growth of democratic government is the distinctive feature of the political history of the civilized world during the last hundred years.

In this growth we are the leaders for all the peoples of the world. But democratic government has not yet reached a finished growth. Two political systems, the hereditary, and the democratic, between which there is an irrepressible conflict, long have been and still are engaged in a struggle for existence. The fundamental principle of the one is, that certain men inherit, by virtue of their blood, from their ancestors, the right to be a people's masters. The fundamental principle of the other is, that certain men are selected, for their fitness, by the will of the people, to be the people's servants. The final result of the conflict between the two systems is free from doubt. The political, physical, and moral well-being of any civilized people is not a possible thing under any system other than a free democratic government. Under no other system is it possible to have, for any long time, a strong, stable, and wise public policy. But the body politic must be so organized that the supreme authority in the state shall be the will of the people. The people must be organized. It must save its strength. It must use its wisdom. It must not waste its time and substance in the never-ending struggles of faction. It must wisely select the men at the head of its government. It must

give them time—to gain knowledge and experience. It must make them responsible — not to leaders of factions, but to the embodied will of the whole people. And then, having so selected them, having placed them under that responsibility, it must make them free to serve the people faithfully, and must not make them the slaves of factions.

We have gone through three successive eras of political existence: the era of the struggle for existence, the era of confederation, and the era of consolidation. We have at last, after a great civil war, become one powerful, compact nation.

We have now to enter on the era of organization. Thus far we have only grown to be one people. We have established the fact that the existence of one government, founded on free democratic principles, for one great nation composed of many large states, is just as necessary, as natural, and as free from danger to the liberties of the people, as is the existence of one government for a small village. But our body politic is not yet well organized.

This work of organization is now the People's Problem, to be solved in the People's Public Meeting.

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